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# THE GOSPEL

ACCORDING TO JESUS.

AN EXPOSITION OF THE ORDINANCE OF BAPTISM,  
THE LORD'S SUPPER, AND FEET WASHING,  
ALSO SEVERAL SERMONS ON PRACTICAL SUBJECTS.

BY EDWARD MASON,

AUTHOR OF HOME PULPIT, &c.

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VALEAT QUANTUM VALERE POTEST.

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DAYTON, OHIO :  
PRESS OF UNITED BRETHREN PUBLISHING HOUSE,  
1888.

# THE GOSPEL

ACCORDING TO TESTS

AN EXPOSITION OF THE ORIGIN AND HISTORY OF THE  
THE GOSPEL, AND THE W. M. M.  
ALSO SEVERAL REMARKS ON THE

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By E. MASON.

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BY EDWARD MASON

VALLEY QUARTERLY VOLUME TWENTY

DAYTON, OHIO  
PUBLISHED BY THE DAYTON PUBLISHING HOUSE  
1888

TO THE BRETHREN CHURCH,  
AS THE UNCOMPROMISING ADVOCATE OF THE  
COMPLETENESS AND SUFFICIENCY OF THE TEACHINGS  
OF THE GOSPEL AND THE GOSPEL ALONE,  
FOR THE SALVATION, GUIDANCE AND INSTRUCTION OF THE  
HUMBLE PILGRIM ON THE WAY TO HEAVEN,  
THIS BOOK IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED BY THE  
AUTHOR.



## PREFACE.

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**I**N giving this book to the public, it is not intended to introduce any opinions and views that only come from the past, but merely to present the facts and truths as they are taught in the New Testament and are substantiated by history. This work is written upon the foundation that the Lord meant what he said, and that what he said was for a purpose. The Greek language is very explicit and expressive, and has undergone no change in all the centuries that are past. The language of the Gospel should be taken at its face value; therefore it is not right to teach or believe that a word meant one thing in the time of Christ, and something else in our time.

Christianity was instituted to civilize and better the condition of humanity by filling the soul with faith, hope, love, and joy. So every means of grace instituted by the Lord and his disciples was for the purpose of arousing and developing the graces and virtues of the heart that make up a true Christian life. The author has no intention of unchristianizing those who may differ with the views contained herein. While the heart must be controlled by the teachings of the Lord Jesus, yet there is a certain

liberty in the exercise of its functions which can only be curtailed by the direct word of the Lord. We must not forget that while the world around us is continually progressing and improving, yet the principles of Christianity remain unchanged. Faith, hope, and charity, eighteen centuries ago, were no different from the same principles that throb in the heart of the modern Christian.

We are under many obligations to Brother P. J. Brown, of Congress, Ohio, for the beautiful thoughts and suggestions in Chapter X. The author has also picked up, here and there, such ideas as would help to make the explanations plainer.

The main object of this work is that the Brethren Church shall appear in her proper light, and that the ordinances that she advocates may be the better understood, and that the object and design of these ordinances may be emphasized. With the hope of accomplishing some little good, and that the Lord will bless this humble effort, this little work is sent forth on its mission of love.

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# THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JESUS.

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## CHAPTER I.

### THE CHURCH, WHAT IS IT?

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*“Come hither, I will shew thee the church, the Lamb’s wife.”* Rev. 21: 9.

*What people say it is.* If we were to select a dozen people, and ask them to define what they considered the church to be, we would receive just as many replies. One would tell us it was a collection of hypocrites. Another would say it was an assembly of fault-finders. A third would consider it a congregation of people who thought themselves better than everybody else. A fourth would look upon it as an association of enthusiasts. But were we to ask a humble child of God, we would be promptly told, “It was the dearest spot on earth.” Whatever the church may be around us, the Bible and our own common sense tell us what it ought to be.

*One church with two lives.* The church has two distinct lives—one on earth and one in heaven. John stood on the mount of spiritual transcendence, and beheld the panoramic vision of the Apocalypse pass before his astonished gaze. Scene after scene, each succeeding one more wonderful than the preceding. The end was approaching. An angel appeared to prepare the aged apostle for the crowning vision—a vision of the eternal home of God's people. "Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife," were the words that ushered this most wonderful of these wonderful scenes before the prophet. This was the celestial destination of the triumphant church. It was the church at rest and peace, enjoying the crown and blessing of a glorious triumph.

*The church militant.* The church triumphant is only the church militant receiving the reward of a well-fought battle. The weapons and armor are laid aside, and now there is an eternal peace. Here, on earth, the duty of the church is to fight against the power and influence of evil and darkness. Here we are a fighting army. In heaven we will be a victorious army. Jesus, our Captain, commenced the warfare. Wherever he met suffering and distress, which are the inevitable consequences of sin, he always endeavored to alleviate and console. His great mission was to do good. To this end he toil-

ed and suffered. Waving the weapons of sympathy, he shouts down the ages to all the legions who would enlist under his banner, "Follow me." The earth has trembled with the tramp of the marching myriads through all the centuries, leaving behind them, not carnage and desolation, but joy and blessing. Asylums and churches have gathered all along the way, ringing their bells, and stretching out the hand of blessing. This is the record of the church militant.

*The husband should control.* The husband by the law of common consent is the head, support, and strength of the family. A dutiful wife will inevitably live under the gentle sway of the scepter of love in the hands of her affectionate spouse. Where the husband is competent and rules with unselfish affection, harmony is the result. But when the husband does not rule, the devil does. By this, we mean that wherever an effort is made to snatch the controlling authority from the hands of a competent and rightful head, discord and unhappiness is the inevitable consequence. A very practical and sensible woman once made the remark, "that if the husband cannot rule the house, he ought not to have one, and the woman ought to have it all to herself." The Lord Jesus Christ is the Bridegroom. He has wooed and won the love of his spouse. At the altar of consecration we have

promised to "love, honor, and obey." So the true bride of the Redeemer meekly submits to his authority and control.

*The word "ecclesia."* The language of the Gospels was the language in common use among the people of that day. Although the English word "church" is only used in a religious sense, yet we find the Greek *ecclesia* having a very definite and extended application. It means simply *an assembly*. No matter what may be the object of congregating, wherever people gathered together, they were *an ecclesia*. If they were assembled for political or social purposes they were merely *an ecclesia*. So when the people gathered together to worship Jesus, they were also *an ecclesia* — an assembly of worshipers. So Jesus calls his followers of all ages *an ecclesia* — an assembly. This is all the word literally means. Although the old English word has grown dear to us through the associations and meanings connected with it, yet we should not clothe it with superstition and cant. Words are merely expressions. It is the meaning, application and result that give them weight and power.

*Sitting at his feet.* The church then in this sense is composed of individuals. The only difference between these particular individuals and others is the peculiar principles that control their

lives. Only those who are willing to be governed by his teaching can belong to the assembly of Christ. In the schools of the old Roman and Greek philosophers, their disciples sat around on the ground, while the teacher stood or walked to and fro dispensing his knowledge. Keeping this humble position of these old ancient students in view, we get a correct idea of the attitude of the meek disciple to the great Master. We sit at his feet, ready to drink in the words of his wisdom that are to lift us out of darkness and sin.

*What constitutes conversion.* Humility and submission are the leading characteristics of the Lord's assembly. These are the first principles taught us. We come *for*, not with, knowledge. Jesus tells us that unless we are "converted and become as little children, we cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven." Nothing can be more explicit and reasonable than this. All former ideas and principles that may have been the foundation of a carnal and selfish life must be given up. It would not be reasonable for every one to bring his own notions into the Lord's assembly. If this were permitted, discord and ruin would soon ensue, for every one would naturally consider his own ideas the best, and would want them universally adopted. Therefore we are to become converted. We have been living to and for ourselves. We are con-

vinced that this is not the design of our creation. We change our ideas and consequently the object of our existence. We become revolutionized. We turn our backs on our former selfish principles, and face in the contrary direction. In other words we are converted, or turned against evil, which is the literal meaning of the word. This conversion implies a beginning of new opinions and actions. To properly progress in this new way, we must become as little children, ready and anxious to learn from the Master. There is nothing in the whole realm of our experience that will better illustrate the attitude of a follower of Jesus than that of a little child, thirsting for knowledge and dependent upon those around it for guidance and teaching. Throwing away all preconceived ideas, and submitting unconditionally to the guidance of Jesus, is the evidence of our complete acceptance of him. There is not a complete submission as long as we still consider ourselves competent to suggest the manner of salvation. Implicit confidence in the Lord Jesus is the only attitude which the soul may assume. This can only be reached by having the spirit of a little child. Wealth, position or influence in this world will avail us nothing in the salvation of the soul.

*Equality in the church.* Equality is another characteristic of the Lord's Assembly. The Lord is no

respector of persons. He will not classify us in accordance with the amount of this world's goods that may be in our possession. Neither are we permitted to "lord" it over the children of God, because we may possess more knowledge than others. Strange though it may appear to a worldly, selfish heart, our standing in the church will be in accordance with our humility and submission to the Lord's will. Jesus called his disciples and said, "Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise authority over them, and they that are great exercise authority over them. But it shall not be so among you; but whomsoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whomsoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant." (Matt. 20: 25-27.) The prominence given everywhere to this feature of Christianity gives it an importance in the church that the carnal heart is very unwilling to accord it. The repetition that we are to have the spirit of a little child, and that we are to be "born again," and that earthly power, position or wealth availeth nothing, and teachings of a similar import, tell us too plainly that the church is not to be judged and controlled as the world.

*Love, the prevailing passion.* Love is another important feature of the Lord's assembly. It may be that all the characteristics of a Christian

are contained in love. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." (John 13: 35.) Love is not a mere feeling, but a passion. It is so strong that it fires the soul and consumes all the minor and meaner impulses. There is no passion that is stronger than true, burning, and unselfish love, which is the grandest ornament of the human soul. How prominently love shines out in the life of Christ. But far above the practical sympathy which called forth the divine power to heal the sick and console the distressed, is the prayer of Jesus for his murderers while he was in the agonies of death—"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." It was love that brought Jesus to earth. Love must be the ruling principle of the Lord's assembly.

*Sacrifice, a universal law.* Sacrifice is the natural expression of love. Love delights to sacrifice. The warmer the love the greater the sacrifice. The intensity of the Father's love is expressed by the consequent sacrifice: "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish but have everlasting life." Sacrifice and Christianity are inseparable. The white robed throng of the redeemed is described as "they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and

made them white in the blood of the Lamb." Sacrifice for the attainment of some great object is not confined merely to religion. A man desires to become wealthy, he schemes and plots and works, sacrificing comfort and even health and happiness in the race for riches. The young man with an ambition for learning, burns the midnight oil, and struggles against every odds, and at last the hacking cough and emaciated form tells of the sacrifice his knowledge cost him. We see this law of sacrifice even entering into nature. The very soil has to be tortured and sacrificed with the plow and harrow before the harvest will appear. So then it is not so very wonderful that sacrifice should be one of the characteristics of Christianity. Garibaldi, the patriot, when endeavoring to raise an army to fight the battles of Italy, came to a crowd of young men whom he was trying to enthuse sufficiently to enlist. "And what inducement do you offer us, General"? asked one. "Hunger, thirst, disease, wounds, death, and at last, — *victory*," was the reply. So when we enter the army of the Lord to battle against evil, we must expect to sacrifice much, but the inevitable result will be victory. It would be very foolish for a soldier to enter the battle-field without expecting to endure hardships and probably death. This has ever been the experience of the Lord's children.

*Love, the beginning and end of all.* But love is the key to the Christian experience. Love opens up to the human heart the treasures of heaven. If we love God with all our heart, the duties of religion will be a joy and consolation and not a burden. Love, and not mere duty, should be the prompting power to urge us on to work. Duty will only perform those things which we consider ourselves compelled or under obligations to undertake, while love knows no limits and prescribes no line, but will even do any work with pleasure. Love will not make us insolent, arrogant, presumptuous, or assuming, but will on the contrary make us humble, and cause us to prefer others before ourselves. Where love is the ruling passion, there is no fear of anything but good actions being the result. We are told that God is love. Not merely that he loves, or that he is loving, but that he *is* love. Love is the atmosphere of heaven. It should and must be the atmosphere of the church. It must be in and around us. We must inhale and exhale it at every breath. Love is the fulfilling of the law. With love as a vital principle, the church will grandly accomplish the work of the Lord.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE "ROCK" AND THE "KEYS" OF SALVATION.

The cause of much trouble—The "keys of the kingdom"—The "keys" are the Words of Jesus—Peter, a representative of all believers—No other "keys" but the Gospel—"Binding" and "loosing"—A necessary qualification—The right idea of Christ necessary—Peter's qualification—Only one way to obtain the "keys"—The weapons of the church.

*"And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."* Matt. 16: 18-19.

*The cause of much trouble.* Experience has taught us that when a few men attempt to rule the church, no matter what their position, office, or authority may be, misrule and disaster is the inevitable result. During the cruel and bloody Middle Ages, when ignorance, crime and violence were the chief characteristics of the church, the above Scripture was boldly quoted as the authority for their unholy deeds. While in these days, the dungeon and the stake are not considered necessary to the safety of the church, yet there is in existence much that may be inconsistent and unscriptural; and these verses are yet quoted for all these irregularities. It is claimed by such people

that in these words the Lord has given them unlimited power to change or amend the law to suit their own prejudices or ignorance. It seems hard to believe that such ignorance should exist in these days. *What do these words mean?* Do we find in them any authority for amending or changing the existing law? What is meant by the expression, "Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven"? To thoroughly grasp at the meaning of this expression, we will go back to the commencement of the circumstance of which this forms a part. The Lord asked of his immediate disciples, "Whom do men say that I, the Son of man am?" They, like all other mortals, ever willing to tell what others thought, replied without hesitation, "Some say that thou art John the Baptist; some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets." Then, having heard the general opinion, he was anxious to know by this time what they, his nearest friends, thought of him. So he said unto them, "But whom say ye that I am?" Then Peter, with his usual impetuosity, said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." This was the proper conception of Christ. Here Peter acknowledged him as the great Messiah that had been promised to the world. He virtually confessed him as the Divine Redeemer of mankind. No sooner was this confession made than

Jesus acknowledged it by pronouncing a blessing upon Peter. This noble, honest confession, in which Peter expressed the right idea of Jesus Christ, at once qualified him to become one of the Lord's disciples. Then Jesus not only blessed him, but recognized the qualification by authorizing him to expound the Lord's system of salvation.

*The “keys of the kingdom.”* He adds, “I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven.” On this expression hangs the Roman doctrine of the supremacy of Peter. It may be true or false that Peter was invested with an authority which the other apostles did not have. But Scripture is entirely mute on the subject. The Lord said nothing in this connection concerning the other apostles. It does not say, “I will give thee the keys which thou shalt transmit to thy successors, who, in all future times, shall have power to open and shut paradise as they please.” Neither is it here said, “I will give thee the keys which will place thee in authority over the other apostles.” Nor does it say, “I will give thee the keys which belong to the apostolic character and age” — a power that is special, local, and temporary. Then what does the expression, “I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven,” mean? Peter had just made a confession which was truly the “rock” on which the church should be built. A proper conception

of Christ is the first essential. And the church built upon such a Rock, "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." The gates of hell—a poetical expression; literally, the threshold of the unseen world, the doorway into eternity—this was death. So the expression meant that while all earthly institutions have to suffer from death and desolation, the church built on the Eternal Rock would be safe, "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

*The "keys" are the Words of Jesus.* Keys were a symbol of authority. When the Jews authorized any man to become a teacher of the law, they put into his hands the key of the closet in the synagogue, where the sacred books were kept, thus intimating that they had entrusted him with power to explain the Scriptures. The Lord virtually gave Peter an authority he was not competent or eligible to receive before. Before the Lord authorized him for the work of disseminating the divine system of salvation, Peter must have the right idea of Christ. This was the great essential. Now he had confessed the divinity of Christ. And he received the "keys" from the Lord himself. They were the "keys" of the *kingdom of heaven*. We cannot reasonably recognize these "keys" as being anything else than the Words of Jesus—the glorious Gospel of Salvation. So the authority given unto Peter

was contained in the Lord's teaching. The same “keys” are in the possession of every present follower of the Lord. Before the “keys” are of any benefit to us we must have the right idea of Jesus, namely, that he is the divine Redeemer of the world. This was the necessary qualification. So here in the above words, Jesus addressed Peter as the representative of all qualified believers. Without this qualification we cannot do any good.

*Peter, a representative of all believers.* Then follows, “And whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” We must keep in view that this “thou” is Peter, who, having acknowledged the divinity of Jesus, at the same time proffered allegiance to him. As long as he acknowledged Jesus as a divine Teacher, he would be led by his will. Then so long as he was led by the will of Jesus, he would not “bind” or “loose” anything that was contrary to his teaching. So that as long as we confess Jesus, not only with our lips, but by our lives, and are led by his teaching, the “keys” will be in our possession. And our “binding” and “loosing” will be in accordance with the divine will. But as soon as we go to “binding” or “loosing” contrary to the will of God, we will be denying him and his authority. Then taking this common sense view of this Script-

ure, how comprehensive and simple we find the expression. Peter, then, in this expression, is only the representative of believers through all time. Wherever the same confession is made, the blessing and authority of the Lord follows.

*No other "keys" but the Gospel.* We want no other "keys" than the Word of God. This Word opens the kingdom of heaven unto all believers. These "keys" come direct from the Lord, and we want no other. That the Lord would give unlimited authority to a few bishops to change and amend his laws to suit their own tastes and prejudices is both unjust and unreasonable. That we may be sure that we have the right "keys," we want to receive them from the Lord himself. Therefore we come with an untrammelled Gospel. We come boldly because it is from the Lord. These "keys" manufactured by the Lord himself need no tinkering. The Lord used them himself, and entered into the glory of heaven. We have no assurance that any other "keys" will open up the promises of God to us. The Pharisees had "keys" of their own, and the Lord denounced them as counterfeits. Then it is also an insult for us to say that the "keys" do not quite fit, that they need a little filing and fitting on our part. The door of heaven is now the same as it always was. The "keys" also are the same. So let us

be sure that we have them as the Lord delivered them.

*“Binding” and “loosing.”* When we go to “binding” and “loosing” contrary to the Lord’s teaching, we cannot expect them to be “bound” and “loosed” in heaven. For to have the sanction of heaven upon our work, let us “bind” and “loose” nothing that is not authorized by his Word. So virtually it is as if the Lord had said, “Go forth, preach my Gospel, bind and loose according as I have taught you, and I will bless and sanction the work.” The church must be built upon the Rock, Christ Jesus. Unfortunately, during the centuries that have passed, the rubbish of tradition, prejudice, superstition, and tyranny, has accumulated and hidden the Rock from view. The church built upon the rubbish of the ages is not safe. So let there be a clearing away. Let us get down to the naked Rock, and there build a structure for eternity, and “the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”

*A necessary qualification.* The “keys” were given to Peter, the humble follower of Jesus, and not Peter the Bishop, or Peter the Pope. And these “keys” are to open up the kingdom of heaven, not merely some imaginary interpretation of his own. It is not a theoretical uncertainty, but a positive fact that he is to proclaim. The Lord’s plain rev-

elation is the only "key," and that is sufficient for our salvation. The soul needs no other.

Peter's qualification was the ground of the authority now committed to him. Christ raises no one to an influential post in his kingdom who has not been previously qualified. We often see men lifted to an office whose functions they are incapable of discharging. Unjust judges, ignorant teachers, and incompetent men everywhere, are the anomalies with which human society has ever been familiar. Outward patronage, not inward power, is too frequently the stepping stone to high offices. Little men in great offices are more the objects of pity than envy. They often lose their nature in pretense and their soul in vanity. When such things enter into the church the evil is all the greater. Men become dizzy on the altitude to which hypocrisy and falsehood has borne them. Now, in the empire of Christ, the man always determines the office. No power, no commission is the order of the Lord. The divine "call" to any ministry is the capacity to discharge its functions. Peter was authorized because he was qualified. So it is really with every work in the Lord's vineyard.

*A right idea of Christ necessary.* The grand conception he had of Christ was his qualification. Without this conception, Peter would have remained with his boats and nets. The idea uttered

in this confession was grand. Take away the idea of a redeeming God and all the biblical ideas will mingle coldly and confusedly together, like the rude elements of the world before the first sun arose upon the long and frigid night of chaos. The Bible in the absence of this idea has no meaning. The Shastras of the Hindoo, or the Koran of the Mussulman would be scarcely more incoherent. In getting this idea, Peter got the “key” by which he could unlock the whole empire of truth.

*Peter's qualification.* This conception qualified him spiritually. The object of Jesus was to save souls. He sends his emissaries and organizes a church to carry on that great work. It is to be done only in the Lord's way. The Lord's means alone are to be used. The world is ever ready to accept the naked truth of the Lord. And men should never carry anything except the “keys,” as the Lord delivered them. The world does not need disciplines, creeds, or legislation, nothing but the simple Word of God. This is all the Lord gives us, all else is human, and we carry it on our own responsibility. A man may have a theoretical knowledge of biblical economy. He may be able to propound it in the most lucid manner, and present it, as a logical whole to the understanding of man; unless in connection with all this, he has a spirit wrought into the sympathy with genius and

design of the gospel, he would miserably represent that which he sought to explain. The gesticulations, tones, and looks of a cold, selfish expounder of the Gospel, contradict his every statement, blunt the point of his every argument, and caricature the very system which he seeks to make plain. If a man would become a correct expounder of God's word, he must lose his own will and idea in its vast design.

*Only one way to obtain the "keys."* Peter was qualified because he had risen to the idea that Jesus Christ was the Redeeming God. Do you ask, my friend, how you may obtain these "keys," that will open up the kingdom of heaven to you? It will not be by striving to put yourself in the line of apostolic succession—the vile invention of a crafty priesthood. This will but make you the dupe of a wicked, and thank God, a waning system, and turn your vigorous manhood into a sickly sacerdotalism. You cannot obtain these "keys" by an ordination of any church, however scriptural, nor by the laying on of any hands, however holy. Neither can you obtain it by formally identifying yourself with any system or church, but by lifting up your conceptions of Christ to the highest altitude, and then permitting your soul to go with the conception. The humblest man may have the real "keys" of heaven, when prelates and popes have

nothing but some of their own making, which will not fit the door of heaven.

*The weapons of the church.* Let our great object then be to qualify men for heaven by promulgating the idea that Jesus is our Redeeming God. That he carries the “keys” to heaven, which he will give to us. To battle with men’s creeds, to scowl at heretics, to pile uncharitable allegations on the head of the erring, to evoke the arm of coercive power, to raise a fume of popular passion—passion too largely compounded of fanaticism, craftiness, and thoughtlessness, is not the work of the church. Shall we define Christianity thus? God forbid! Where do we find Jesus using such means? The weapons of our warfare are the Gospel of Christ in the hand, and the love of God in our souls. With these simple, heavenly weapons the world will be conquered, and the nations be brought under the gentle yoke of infinite love.

## CHAPTER III.

### THE PRINCIPLES OF CHRISTIANITY.

The power of ideas — Religious ideas the most important — The right idea of Christ, the greatest of all — Who and what is God? — God's love — Descends from heaven to the heart — Christianity not clouded in mystery — The mission of Jesus — The Ten Commandments — Love, not duty, the proper motive — Love the great antidote — Why love is the greatest — The church known by her love.

*"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself."* Luke 10: 27.

*The power of ideas.* Of all powers that influence mankind, there are none so powerful as ideas. Man is the subject of ten thousand influences every day. In the field, in the store, in the family, among his friends, impressions are made that eventually create ideas. Look, what ideas have accomplished. Our labor-saving machines, our steam-ships, our telephones and telegraphs, and a thousand other appliances, are only the development of ideas. They lift the savage to the sage, and turn the sinner into a saint. These developed ideas create the difference between the wild man of the woods, and the Newton of the stars. They are the pathway from the kingdom of darkness into the empire of light — the steps by which a sangui-

nary persecutor rises to a paragon of meekness and an apostle of love. These ideas are complete and absolute masters. We are the slaves, humble and submissive.

*Religious ideas the most important.* Of all the ideas that govern a man there are none so powerful as the religious. While men will be moved by other ideas, and other faculties, sometimes the intellect, sometimes the imagination, sometimes the emotions, will be roused, religious ideas stir the whole man. Like the beams of the sun they will penetrate the deepest abyss of the soul, and melt away every cold feeling until the whole man will burst into life. Let a man believe he is doing God service, and under the influence of that belief, what will he not do? He will fight with the desperate energy of a crusader, suffer with the indomitable heroism of a martyr, and labor with the self-immolating spirit of an apostle. When these religious ideas are wrong they will ruin, when they are right they will elevate. It is to this power that the self-denying, though misguided zeal of the middle ages may be attributed.

*The right idea of Christ, the greatest of all.* Then of all religious ideas none are so powerful as the right idea of Christ. Who is Christ? What is Christianity? These are questions that must be answered so that our powers may be guided in the

proper channel. What strange sentiments exist concerning Jesus! Some with impious arrogance say that he was a clever impostor, and the prince of deceivers. Others with a pseudo-philosophic air will aver that he had existence only in the imagination of superstitious people, that his history is not a fact but a fable. Some again, in mock reverence will admit his existence, but say that he was only a great man, only to be placed side by side with the great heroes of the world—Confucius, Socrates, Mahomet, Luther and Cromwell. Others, rising as they suppose to a sublime conception, would admit that he was more than a man, that he was super-human, but not divine. Then again there are others who with Peter will say, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

*Who and what is God?* What questions! Who can answer? The language of earth cannot portray the majesty of the King of heaven. The mind of man sinks into utter nothingness under the conception. The artist will try to paint the morning. He gathers a few yards of canvas, and transfers to it a few hills, radiant and glorious and sparkling beneath the rays of the rising sun, a few grass blades are represented glittering with diamond dewdrops, and soon his task is over. He has only taken a very small atom of

the world's surface. The huge snow-capped mountains, the pathless ocean, the gigantic forests, the almost endless plains, and the infinite summer sky, where are they? Canvas could not produce the reality. At best it produces but an atom. So we find men attempting to photograph God. From their weak resources and narrow views, they produce a small conception of one of his attributes, and with a great deal of bombast and importance, say, "Behold our God." But the latter is no more a true portrait of God than the artist's effort is a picture of the universe.

*God's love.* We find this written on every page of the Bible. It is inscribed on every event in history. It is warbled forth by ten thousand tongues of living nature. Revelation does not tell us that God is mercy, or that God is justice, but that God is *love*. Not that he is merely loving, but that God is literally *love*. Love is the parent of all the graces and attributes that decorate the character of the Infinite God. We find mercy, the first-born of love, very early in the history of the human family. When God created our first parents and launched them out on the ocean of life, he surrounded them with all that would make life joyous and happy. It is hard for us, who have ever lived here amidst the evidences of sin, where every pleasure is mysteriously intermingled with

sorrow, to understand the happiness of our first parents when they basked in innocence and joy unalloyed with grief. Love held undisputed sway of the universe, and was showered lavishly upon the world. As long as all was innocence, love was the only attribute called forth. But one dark day, sin entered the abode of bliss, and cast its cold shadow across their pathway of sunshine. Then in quick succession followed the exposure, the denoucement and expulsion. People thoughtlessly consider that the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden was the consequence of their sin. Or in other words they were expelled because they had eaten of the forbidden fruit. This is not so. In this expulsion we see the display of infinite mercy. In Genesis 3: 22, we read, "Now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever: therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden." Thus to prevent Adam from committing eternal suicide he was cast out—he was placed beyond the danger line, and out of temptation. What an act of far-seeing mercy! The Lord does not receive very much credit for this act. So all along the generations, we see mercy shining out in all its bright radiancy, making the whole earth burst out with joy and gladness. He who tempers the wind to the shorn

lamb, is filling the earth with happiness by the constant display of infinite mercy. And for the last nineteen centuries the world has been echoing the song of the angels — “Goodwill toward men.”

*Descends from heaven to the heart.* So full was heaven of love, that the jasper walls could no longer contain it. One day a great wave of love dashed over the parapets, and deluged the world. When man was created, and the clay became life, God breathed into our being the spirit of love. The love still exists, although in many instances selfishness, hatred, and all other devilish passions, have well-nigh frozen up the fountain of love in our hearts. Still it exists within us. The more we partake of the divine nature, the less we allow the evil to freeze all the good within us.

*Christianity not clouded in mystery.* What is Christianity? Christianity, like God, is love. Nothing more, nothing less. In whatever language we may clothe the definition of this word, whatever mystery we may throw around it, no matter how hypocrisy and inconsistency may prejudice the minds of the children of men, Christianity is nothing more or less than love put into everyday life. Some think Christianity is a belief in Christ. Others say it is a code of ethics for the regulation of our conduct. But it is merely the teaching of Christ. This constitutes but one lesson — the

lesson of love. What we call the system of Christianity is very simple. Ministers, with misguided zeal and with innocent ignorance, surround religion with much mystery, which only exists in their own simple brains. Many of the doctrines that are held sacred by orthodox churches are not generally accepted, merely because they are the result of the superstitions of other nations and times. Religion is presented as contrary to reason and common sense, which is a direct insult to Almighty God. To think that he has endowed us with reason and common sense, and then ask us to accept a religion that is contrary to these principles, is making God unjust and tyrannical. No wonder we have skeptics and even infidels, when such unreasonable superstitions are advocated in the age of enlightenment. The religion of Jesus Christ is simple and comprehensive. There are no mysteries in it except what ignorant and superstitious people will place there.

*The mission of Jesus.* Jesus Christ comes to us as the Savior of mankind. The very name implies his mission. Jesus Christ—the Anointed Savior. All those who came in the name of Jehovah on a special and exalted mission were consecrated to the service by anointing. And thus the importance of his mission was implied when he was called the “Anointed.” The name of Jesus means

much, and was not bestowed upon him without a reason. The name gives us in a few words the object and design of salvation. In Matthew 1: 21, we read that the proclaiming angel said unto Joseph, "Thou shalt call his name Jesus." Why? Then listen attentively to the reason: "For he shall save his people from their sins." What volumes of simplicity here! We read much about "atonement," "salvation," "vicarious suffering," and I do not know how many more theological terms. When we have read all about these terms, we are more in the brush than when we commenced to try to understand. Oh, the time and talent that has been wasted explaining — I hardly know what to call it, so I shall say — some people's ideas, for they are not the Lord's. Here the angel tells us what Jesus came for. He came to save the people from what? Their sin. To accomplish this they must follow him — not only in his teaching, but in his example. Little by little, step by step, he leads us through all the experiences of life into the world beyond. His teaching is not merely a system of worship to be followed; but a system of living to be lived out. The world is steeped in sin, he came to cure it, if we do but allow him to teach us.

*The Ten Commandments.* But let us go back, so that we may understand Christianity. When the

people of Israel left the bondage of Egypt, and were fairly launched in the wilderness, under the leadership of Moses, acknowledging no master nor king but God, He gave them a code of laws for their guidance. These laws are generally called the "Ten Commandments." Did you ever analyze them? See how easily they divide themselves into two great divisions—our duty to God, and our duty to man. The first four contain our duty to God, the remaining six our duty to each other. When Jesus came on earth he did not come to destroy the law and the prophets, but to fulfill. See how grandly he did this. The Jews accused him of trying to kill the old law, but they were blinded by hatred and prejudice. He showed them that his interpretation of the law was the only true one. The Ten Commandments are as much in force to-day as they ever were. They are the laws of heaven. Jesus came to show us how they could be kept. Read his Sermon on the Mount. Hear how he tells us that love is to be the great motive power of all our actions.

*Love, not duty, the proper motive.* The Jews were led by a kind of sentimental, stern duty. Jesus tells us that love, not duty, is to be the power that will enable us to obey God. He came to save his people from their sin. Sin was the leprosy with which the human family was stricken. Jesus held up the

antidote, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up." Yes, lift up the Son of man. Lift up his teaching. It contains the only antidote for the great sin-poison. It is the law of love. That is how we can lift up Jesus — by lifting up his Gospel of love.

*Love the great antidote.* "Love," says the apostle, "is the fulfilling of the law." Of course it is. Get a man full of love, and you get him full of obedience and religion and salvation. Heaven is full of love, Jesus is the connection. Then if we must get full, let us hold on to Jesus and be filled with the heavenly gift. Jesus said in answer to a question, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself." Then he adds, "This is the law and the prophets." If a man is filled with love to God — if he loves him with all his heart, and soul, and strength, there is no fear but that he will worship him truly and completely. So if a man loves his fellow-man, there is no fear that he will steal from him, or that he will abuse him, or injure him in any way. To keep from abusing and deceiving him he must love him. So then love to God and man is the way to do our duty to them. Thus love becomes the fulfilling of the law.

*Why love is the greatest.* Again, love is the greatest of all virtues: "Now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity." Why is love the greatest? It will accomplish most. See how much love accomplished in the world's redemption! "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son." Then, again, faith is only necessary for this life. Faith gives us that sight with which we can penetrate beyond this life. But in eternity we shall not need it, as we shall then be able to see what we have believed in. This, too, is the way with hope. Hope is the sunshine of our lives, giving us light to cross over the dark rivers of despondency. But in eternity hope is not needed. It will give way to the reality. But love will live forever. It will span over the gulf with us. The grace of love will never die. Thus it is the greatest, not only because of the power there is in it, but because it will live forever. It is infinite and eternal. Remember God is love. As long as God lives, so long will love exist. They are inseparable.

*The church known by her love.* Again, love is the distinguishing mark of the Christian. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." The greatest hypocrite can pretend to pray, and can don a religious garb, but he cannot pretend to love. Love and

hatred will show themselves in a thousand little ways. Every word, every movement of the body, every look, will manifest either love or hatred. It will break out a hundred times a day unbidden. The reason Jesus condemned the Pharisees was not because he condemned their doctrine, but because they killed or made of none effect the commandments of God by their tradition. The commandment of God was to love. Their traditions taught them to act unkindly to all who did not believe as they did. So they made love of none effect. Thus Christianity is love. Love must reign in the church. People must behold it, and beholding, they will admire. It is the great magnet that will draw the nations to Jesus. The world is love-sick—it is pining for more love. There is so much selfishness and ingratitude in the world that souls get weary. So let us throw wide open the doors of the church. Let the light of love go far out into the world, so that it may be a kindly beacon light to the weary sailor, tossed on the tempestuous billows of life, anxious to anchor his bark safely within the vale of eternal bliss. Let your light so shine out, brethren. Trim your lamps, fill them up with divine grace, and then let them burn for Jesus and mankind.

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE FRUITS OF CHRISTIANITY.

An immutable law — What morality is — It is the creation of man — It is a prominent feature of Christianity — The controlling principle in man — How to recognize the true church — Selfishness not found in the true church — The church not for “fairs,” etc. — How it becomes a “house of merchandise,” and a “den of thieves” — Where shall we draw the line? — Is dancing wrong? — Where to draw the line.

“Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.” Matt. 7: 20.

*An immutable law.* This is one of the immutable laws of God. We estimate the value of things as they add to our comfort or wealth. In the vegetable kingdom a tree or plant is valuable as it answers the purpose for which it was obtained. In the animal kingdom, the value of a beast is estimated in accordance with his usefulness. So, even, in the human being, the true value of man is not his appearance or position, but the benefit he is to his fellow-creatures and the world in general. So Jesus lays down the principle, that a man is to be judged by the actions of his life. These are the scales in which he will always be weighed. We judge each other according to this rule. It is the law which will regulate the decision of the world.

And in the Bible we are told that God will also judge us by our actions.

*What morality is* Moral character is man's only real property. Man has really nothing that he can call his own, but this. His wealth, land, or other property, is only his in an inferior sense. His existence is not his own. His whole being belongs to God. "All souls are mine," saith the Lord. But character is the product of man's free and independent agency, and is peculiarly his own — he is the creator of it. We have often heard morality denounced by ignorant, thoughtless men from the pulpit. Morality is one of the objects of Christianity. We must recognize it in its proper place, and at its proper value. Morality without Christianity lacks power and vitality. Christianity without morality is a fraud and a lie. Better have morality without Christianity than not have it at all.

*It is the creation of man.* Moral character is the only measure of man's real worth. Sometimes men are considered great according to the power of their genius, the extent of their attainments, the amount of their social influence, or the magnitude of their secular possessions. But in the sight of God a man is great or otherwise according to the texture and quality of his moral character. If that character is after the great example of Jesus, pure, and full of practical sympathy, though he

may have to struggle with poverty, and be clad in rags, and have only a hut for his dwelling, yet in the sight of God he is great, angels will be his willing servants, and Jesus will call him brother, and God will welcome him among his favored children.

*It is a prominent feature of Christianity.* This moral character is the only possession he will bear with him to the other world. Earthly possessions, home, friends, and even our own bodies, we will leave this side of eternity, but moral character we will carry with us. Our character is the source whence springs our eternal weal or woe. The germ of paradise, or the fuel of hell, is enwrapped in every character. We must allow character to have its proper place in the arrangement of things. The Roman Church is blamed for laying too much stress on good works. But does not the whole world admire charity and sacrifice, no matter by whom they are practiced? But is it not a fact that the Protestant churches lay too little stress on good works? We hear much in the churches about grace, and faith, and hope, and religion, but very seldom are good works mentioned. Charity and sacrifice are talked about as if they were distinctly separate from religion. Indeed sometimes they are mentioned as if they were antagonistic to the religion of Jesus. So much is this the case

that many of the churches are barren of practical religion, and people act as if Christianity consisted of nothing else than ceremony and form. Yet, the greatest sermon ever preached on earth — that from which the basis of this chapter is taken, consisted of nothing but moral teaching.

*The controlling principle in man.* The heart controls the man. There is a principle in man which governs his actions, The allusion to the thorns, and grapes, and figs, and the “corrupt tree,” and the “good tree,” in the mountain sermon, justifies us in concluding that what the governing instinct is to a brute, and what the vital sap is to a tree, the disposition of the heart is to the man. It is out of the heart the issues of his life proceed. The underlying element of character, like the principle of life in all its forms, assimilates everything to itself, turns everything into its own essence. Life in the tree turns everything it appropriates into tree. Life in the animal turns everything into animal. The rose transmits all into rose, and the vine all things into vine. The wolf all things into wolf, and the man all things into man. Now, the controlling disposition of man acts in this way. If this disposition be sensual, it turns everything into sensuality; if it be selfish, it turns everything into avarice; if it be religious, it turns everything into religion. So a man, truly a follower of Jesus, will

use every opportunity and privilege for the good of mankind. Jesus came to benefit mankind. He came to bring a blessing on earth—yea, and the earth was blessed. He taught that religion was divided into two great parts—love to God, love to man. He showed his love to God by loving his fellow-men. Love is the fruit of religion. Love performs only good actions. So the church organized to carry on the work of Jesus, is to bless mankind. If it does not do this, it is a failure. So every individual is expected to yield some of this divine fruit. This fruit consists of the actions of the life.

*How to recognize the true church.* Looking around us to-day at the diversity of opinions concerning religion and the Bible, it is enough to bewilder a poor earnest seeker after truth. One says, "We alone are right." Another, pointing with pride to his church, says, "Look at our prosperity, is not that enough to convince you?" And so we look from one to another, and are astonished. All claim allegiance to the same God, and profess to believe in the same Bible, and yet how different. Then to quiet all our doubts and fears the Lord says, "By their fruits ye shall know them." Ah! then here is the test. Here is a criterion by which we can all come to a definite conclusion. We have but to notice and weigh the actions. We believe that the

principal object of the church is to worship God and benefit mankind. Therefore whatever is not directly or indirectly in either of these two channels is not right.

*Selfishness not found in the true church.* At one time the Lord entered the temple and found it used by merchants and traders for the carrying on of their business. He not only denounced them, but violently expelled those intruders from the sacred place, saying, "My house shall be called a house of prayer, but ye have made it a den of thieves." In another place it says, "But ye have made it a house of merchandise." How often are the privileges of the church abused! The church should be a divine and necessary school to educate, purify and perfect our social natures. Here the affections of the soul are drawn out by the sublimest influences of God upon the mind. Man should lose all proud ideas of external distinction here, and feel that he stands on the same common basis as the poorest man that walks the globe. Man requires the strong influences of religion to take him out of the narrow circle of his own individual interests, to break down those barriers of selfhood that shut the soul up in itself, and to bring him out into the great sphere of universal interests. Then, when we see men and women, so puffed up by too great an opinion of themselves, that they cannot treat

their fellows with respect, or even condescension, it is the wrong kind of fruit. The church is not to be the receptacle for selfishness, conceit, or pride.

*The church not for "fairs," etc.* Then, again, the church is a place for the exercise of piety and philanthropy. The temple of God is a house of prayer. The spirit of prayer is the realization of the creature's dependence upon his Creator. What Christ did in the temple, we may rest assured is right to be done within its sacred precincts. Jesus healed the sick there. It is a place not merely for the cultivation of the spirit of prayer, but for the cultivation of true benevolence. It is as religious to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and heal the wounded in the temple, as it is to pray. But the Lord found people using the sacred place for mercenary purposes. They bought and sold and bartered. The people needed these things for the services of the temple. And if such would be permitted at all, surely it would be permitted now. But no, the Lord condemned it severely. What would the Lord say to some of the practices in many of our modern churches? The sacred place is defiled by having "fairs," "bazaars," "socials," and we hardly know what, at these gatherings, questionable practices, such as gambling, asking exorbitant prices for articles, and, in fact, turning the house of God, not only into a house of mer-

chandise, but into a den of thieves. These practices ought to be condemned without mercy.

*How it becomes a "house of merchandise" and a "den of thieves."* The church is desecrated when it is used as the means of temporal gain. Those sordid barterers that Christ denounced and expelled did this. They made a trade of religion. What millions do the same even in Christendom to-day? Every man that makes religion an engine for political or secular ends; every minister who officiates for the sake of its temporal emoluments; in fact, every individual who in any way connects himself with religion from selfish and secular considerations, commits a profanation identical in principle with that of those whom the Lord drove out of the temple. We often find that these questionable practices carried on at church fairs and socials, are excused, because the object is either to pay the minister's salary, repair the church, or some other good thing. Therefore the object justifies the means. What a fallacy! In nine cases out of ten, there is a rivalry between the churches. Some church has what another has not, so the inferior one is not going to be outdone. They either are too poor or too stingy to contribute the money outright, so a "fair" is planned. The devil is invited to help beat that other church around the corner. In either case it is wrong. No

church ought to have what it is too poor to buy. To covet what a richer church happens to have, and want it merely out of a spirit of rivalry, makes the sin all the greater. The practice of turning the house of God into a house of merchandise for the purpose of feeding the vanity is getting entirely too common, and needs to be denounced without mercy. That kind of fruit is not only bad, but rotten; within it is death and pestilence. If all this was bad in the Lord's day, it is wrong in the year of grace, 1888. Age never makes a wrong right.

*Where shall we draw the line?* Where will you draw the line? is a great question. Where God has drawn it, is the surest reply. Religion has often suffered from its professed adherents. If there has been no conversion, the controlling principle is narrow, selfish, and carnal. Therefore the fruit of such a life must be bad. Gloomy countenances, sombre attire, and stern manners, have repelled the young, and given religion a bad odor. God made man to be happy. He has placed at his disposal the means to reach that happiness. Parents will say, "Our children must have recreation." And the probability is, that they will dive into very questionable, if not sinful pleasures. Some people's views have changed considerably concerning certain pleasures; but notwithstanding

the change of men's minds, the Bible with its truth remains unchanged.

*Is dancing wrong?* How often are we asked if dancing is wrong. People will justify it by saying it is good exercise, that it gives grace to the movements, and so forth. But let us analyze. Why is dancing better exercise than running or washing? For in many cases those who have a passion for dancing are not over-fond of making themselves useful at home. On the contrary, they are often found to be indolent, and sometimes rather undutiful. The atmosphere of a dance-room is not very conducive to industry and good training. Again, if it is merely to develop a good form, why do not members of the same sex dance together? There may be no harm sometimes in dancing, yet we know instances where it was the first step to ruin. It is not so much the mere act, but the principle that prompts it that must be taken into consideration. The same also may be said of card-palying, horse-racing, and kindred amusements. What minister would, after his discourse, ask the prayers of the congregation for this dance, or that game, or the other race? Yet if there was nothing wrong in them, it would be right to ask the Lord's blessing. Our own better judgment and conscience would draw the line between religion and dancing.

*Where to draw the line.* Let us draw the line where journalists draw it. To increase the sale of newspapers, you will see some inconsistency of a minister flaunted in glaring headlines,—“Great Clerical Scandal,” —“Preacher in Trouble,” —“Hypocritical Professor of Religion.” Worldly journalists condemn actions in professors of religion that they themselves would indulge in without hesitation. People expect a great deal from those who profess to be Christians.

Let us draw the line where the condemned felon in the cell and on the scaffold draws it. How often do we hear men, about to be launched into eternity from the scaffold, advise the young to beware of the dance and the card-table. They look back and trace the beginning of their terrible career to one of these evils. Some say that we must not be too strict or too particular. To whom do we say this? Surely not to the cashier while locking up the safe which contains our money. They cannot be too particular about that. We will not say it to the banker who holds our deposits. We will not say it to our lawyer who is filling out our title deeds. We will not say it to our physician about to prescribe for ourselves or our families. Let us then remember that the destiny of ourselves and our children is of vital importance. Let our recreations then be elevating.

Draw the line where it will be drawn in eternity. It is God's line. We dare not change it. Man makes lines, but they are imperfect and crooked. About some things we are very strict, about others we are very loose. Generally we are too strict about the more harmless things, and too loose about the more important. It is the old story of tithing mint, anise and cummin, while we reject mercy and love. Remember that we shall be judged by our fruit. Then let us do all in our power to produce that which is good.

## CHAPTER V.

### CHRISTIAN GROWTH.

God's laws are unchangeable—Man, the great exception—The kingdom of God is like a seed sown—The seed or the soil, in themselves, not promising—The ploughshare of repentance—The harrow of affliction—Cultivation and knowledge—In grace, revelation necessary—Transformation—The process is slow—Insignificant beginnings.

*"So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground."* Mark 4: 26.

*God's laws are unchangeable.* We see them above us, beneath us, and around us. The same law that governs the stars and planets in their revolutions, governs the nations of earth in their complex variations and repetitions of historical facts. The same law that governs and follows the seed when it is cast into the ground, and causes the germ of life to burst through its tiny shell, and spring up into a plant, and then bear fruit similar to that which was sown, governs the life and actions of man. We recognize the law of natural growth so readily. We have become acquainted with it, because it has been so often repeated. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap," is a divine law in the spiritual as well as the natural world. When we sow turnip seed, we do not expect radishes. When

we plant apple trees, we do not expect tomatoes or watermelons, but apples. When we sow barley we expect barley, and not oats. So it is in the spiritual world. When we sow love, we reap love. When we sow hate, we reap hate. Love and hate in their turn invariably produce love and hate.

*Man, the great exception.* We said that whatsoever is sown will be reaped. We recognize the truthfulness of this assertion in nature. But in the whole realm of nature and grace, there is one exception to this general rule, and that is—man. By looking around us we behold the bounties of nature—the great blessings that are bestowed upon us by the great power that controls “nature”—nature’s God. For all the great blessings of nature that are bestowed upon us, what does man give in return? Then when we open the pages of history, and behold the foot-prints of God everywhere, what has he received in return? No matter whether we look into the realm of nature, history, or religion, we see only love, *love*, LOVE everywhere, from the great Creator and Benefactor, and what a poor harvest is the result of so much love-sowing! But let us carry out the similitude.

*The kingdom of God is like a seed sown.* This is reiterated through four parables. What happens when a seed is sown? By the mysterious processes of nature, the secret of which no scientific investi-

gations are able to reveal, the seed gathers out of the mineral earth matters and juices, and transforms them into vegetable tissues. It converts the dead into the living. It converts the clay and loam, here into wheat, there into barley, now into apples, and now into peaches. The meadow becomes a home of chirping insects, a city of life; the vale becomes a forest, a nesting place for birds. The transformation and growth of a seed is more wonderful than that which occurred, when, at a word, Christ changed water into wine. It is like that which took place when God said, "Let there be light," and light was; and when a new world sprang up at his command out of chaos. The transformation is radical; it is a change of nature, of form, of substance.

*The seed or the soil, in themselves, not promising.* Let us pick up the seed and examine it. There is nothing in the seed that we can expect such a revolution. Look, too, at the soil. Gather your hands full, examine it. And in the soil we see nothing that would cause us to look forward to such a result. It is but a seed! It is but soil—common earth! And there is nothing in either to give promise or prophecy of the future revelation.

So when we go back and look at the seed of Christianity, surely looking at it from a carnal standpoint, there was nothing that would give

promise of the great results that have flooded the world. The prophecy of Isaiah expresses the unpromising outlook from the Savior's social position and surrounding: "For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him." This was so literally fulfilled. When we remember Jesus as the son of a humble carpenter, of one of the most despised villages of poor down-trodden Palestine; when we see him roaming through the land of the Jews, with his twelve obscure, illiterate, bronzed, hard-fisted sons of toil as his only companions, homeless and poor, we cannot but realize the insignificance of his birth, position, and influence viewed from a worldly point of view. We should not forget his accusation, suffering, and disgraceful death—the death of a criminal-slave; and what a bearing this has in establishing the truthfulness of the prophecy. The destiny of the whole structure of Christianity, left in the hands of eleven unlettered men. Surely there was nothing in this seed to give promise or prophecy of the ultimate grand result. Neither, indeed, could we expect much from the soil into which the seed was cast. The self-righteous, vindictive, and jealous-hearted Pharisees, the cruel prejudices of the Jew, the proud,

contemptuous Roman, the philosophic, conceited Greek, and the general opposition of all the heathen idolaters, was such that there seemed little hope for the simple truth of Christianity.

*The plowshare of repentance.* The kingdom of heaven is a growth. This is a law of God everywhere. Wherever there is life there is growth. And if we want to comprehend the growth of grace in the heart, we must look into the great book of nature and from its pages read the answer to our question. The kingdom of God is within us. It is in the soul that we look for the growth of the seed. If any of us had a field overgrown with weeds, and we desired to cultivate it, and sow good, useful seed, what is the first thing we would do? We would get out the old plow and go to work, not only to break up the soil, but to tear out the weeds by the roots and bury them. So is it with man. The heart of man is fertile soil. It is overgrown with weeds of sin. To sow the seed of the gospel in the midst of these weeds, and expect it to grow and yield, would be as unprofitable as if we were to sow wheat in a weedy field. So the plowshare of repentance must tear up the heart, the weeds must be rooted out and buried. How beautifully this harmonizes with the means of grace that he has provided! We not only repent; but the old man, the man of sin must be buried—buried with him

in baptism. So we must have a rite that typifies this. The Lord thus teaches us eternal truths through these homely figures.

*The harrow of affliction.* Then after the heart is torn up by the plowshare of repentance, the soil is so hard and lumpy, that it needs the harrow. So God often sends the harrow of affliction to pulverize the heart, and bring it to the condition which is best fitted for the development and growth of the seed.

*Cultivation and knowledge.* The next thing needed is cultivation. This is another of God's laws. Good, useful plants and trees need careful cultivation to give them the proper development. Weeds need no cultivation. All that is necessary to their growth is to be left alone. So it is with the soul. The soil of the heart needs cultivating to make the seed successful and the harvest sure. How perseveringly and constantly does the good farmer watch the growing crops, keeping down the weeds, working and coaxing the young plants to spring up and yield! Thus it is in the realm of grace. The weeds of sin need no cultivation. All that is necessary to their growth is to be allowed to grow without molestation. Sin will soon develop amidst spiritual inactivity. But the good seed needs constant care to develop.

There are laws and rules of cultivation. A violation of these laws places the crop in jeopardy. The more closely these laws are adhered to, the better and the surer the success. God did not reveal to man the laws of cultivation, because God has so created man, with intelligence, ambition, and a constant thirst for knowledge and advancement, that experience would develop these laws as necessity would require. So has it proven to be. As man has multiplied, and his wants become more pressing and varied, he has delved into the depths of science, so that he has been able to meet every emergency. No sooner is a want felt in the great struggle of humanity than a new discovery or invention brings to light the very thing needed.

*In grace, revelation necessary.* But in the realm of grace it is different. Man with his carnal heart, and sinful propensities, and selfish disposition, would never be able to bring to light a plan of salvation with its means of grace. Man's power to invent and explore has a limit. It cannot fathom infinity. As the spiritual and infinite is beyond the reach of man, nothing but a direct revelation of God would give us light to cultivate this good seed so that there may be a growth and a subsequent harvest.

*Transformation.* Again, another lesson we may learn from this common illustration. The growth is accomplished by a process of transformation. The plant as soon as it sprouts from the seed, and begins to hold its head out above the soil, and breathe a new atmosphere, is no more the seed than the oak is the acorn, or the chicken is the egg. It is indeed completely new, and may be a true sample of evolution—the only true evolution that is beyond all doubt and question. The plant is a new form in the existence of the seed. So after the seed of truth has been firmly sown in the heart, and the young plant begins to live in a new atmosphere, it is a complete transformation. In scriptural language the bursting of the seed of truth and springing up into active growth, is called the “new birth.” The man is truly “born again.” There is quite a distinction made between the old man and the new man. Living a new life, breathing a new atmosphere, and reaching and pointing heavenward, is a true picture of a converted soul.

The transformation or *metamorphosis*, as it is literally, the latter being merely the Greek word, is complete, and is caused by the Lord Jesus entering into the being of man. Thus he transforms man into himself. It is the seed in the soil which is the hope of its glory. The essence of the soil enters into the seed and the plant, giving it the

necessary nourishment. So, also, it is Christ in the heart which is the hope of its glory.

The transformation of earthly love illustrates this transformation of the divine love. The bride and the husband act and react on each other, and grow into likeness of soul through loving sympathy. By constant and close communion of thoughts and purposes, they become alike in their aspirations, their tastes and fancies become similar, and they are truly one in the strictest sense of the word. The husband transplants his peculiarities into the nature of the bride. So, too, are the feelings and the sentiments of the bride implanted into the life of the husband. The mother plants the seed of her courage or cowardice or honesty or dishonesty in the child, and reproduces herself in him. Take the babe and place it in the arms of a besotted, brutal, criminal mother. Let the little one inhale the fumes of intoxication, and let the first words that meet the tender ear be profanity, and the child will grow up with the seed of vice sown in the heart, which eventually develops and ripens into that kind of fruit which is the curse of humanity. But on the other hand, let it be cradled in the lap of piety, inhaling religious instruction at every breath, lullabied with the grand gospel songs that echo through the memory of all subsequent life, and the little one's first lisping is the offering

of a prayer at a mother's knee. Such seed tenderly sown in the young heart develops into a tree bearing the glorious fruits of love and good works.

The coward on the battle-field puts panic in the whole line, while the hero puts himself into the heart of his panic-stricken comrades, and changes cowards into heroes, and the rout into victory. Thus the example and spirit of one influences the hearts and conduct of those who are drawn toward him by love. Jesus, by his life-teaching and spirit, inspires those who look to him for help and guidance. His influence, life, and teaching, are ever present, and while we delight in these, and our spirit imbibes his spirit, we become more and more like him. In accordance with our desire for communion with him, our lives are influenced, and we become transplanted into his nature. Jesus is the divine seed dropped in the dead soil. Whatever community he enters he transforms. He makes it Christian. He evolves out of pagan Saxons—murdering, drinking, and roistering,—the Anglo-Saxon race, whose virtues find their play henceforth in taming the wilderness of a new world.

*The process is slow.* The husbandman plants, he sleeps and rises, night and day, and goes his way; but the seed grows, and the harvest comes slowly but surely. We see that God also works in the realm of grace, and the crops are growing and

ripening for the great harvest. The time seems long to the impatient. Amid many trials and afflictions, we sigh for the coming of the Lord. We wonder why the reign of love and peace is so long coming. We forget that the day of gladness may come at any time for us. Before another day revolves around the Lord may come to some of us.

We notice the difference between man working without God and with God. Let a man build a house, nature straightway sets to work to undo his building. Rust eats into the iron and decay into the wood, little by little, time ravages and destroys. But if a man plants seed into the soil, nature proceeds to complete his unfinished work. He sows a seed, and behold wheat! He plants a cutting, and behold a tree! Such is the difference of working alone and working with God. A man endeavors to carve out his own destiny, and build upon earthly foundation a home for himself, and all earth and hell seem to threaten him and gain the victory. But the good seed is dropped into the heart, lies there, is a long time hidden, eventually sprouts, pushes forth the blade and ear, and finally the full corn. Not always at once, but after long delay. But it fails not.

*Insignificant beginnings.* A seed is a small thing, and who can guess what may be the consumma-

tion! The seed may be mustard-seed, the least of all, the herb may be the greatest of herbs.

What more insignificant beginning than the carpenter's son! What greater consummation than this Christianity, which shelters us from oppression, and from whose branches the songs of praise pour forth, filling the air with joy.

What more insignificant beginning than the obscure monk, nailing, with trembling hand, his theses on the gate of the church at Wittenburg! What greater consummation than the Reformation with its freedom in church and state, growing of itself beyond all possible conception of the monk, the sower.

What so insignificant as a word, a mere puff of air, a wave of sound; but what lives so immortal, so deathless an existence! The temples of Egypt are in ruins, but the ten words which God spoke to Moses still live, because they were sown in human hearts.

Of the temple of Herod, forty-three years in building, not one of the stones is left upon another; but the simple story that Christ told his peasant congregation of a husbandman going out to sow, will never die, and will never cease to gain wider and wider audience and influence till human hearts no longer need its inspiration.

## CHAPTER VI.

### WHAT CONSTITUTES CHRISTIAN BAPTISM.

Baptism generally acknowledged by all sects—A poor soul converted—Desires to become a child of God—Meets an obstacle—Why is “*baptizo*” not translated?—What does it mean?—“Much water” a necessity—“Both” went into the water—Every evidence has its weight—“Buried” in baptism—Immersion is baptism.

*“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”* Matt. 28: 19.

*Baptism generally acknowledged by all sects.* All Christian denominations, with few exceptions, acknowledge baptism. All use, or pretend to use, the same formula, found in Matthew 28: 19. With all the existing shades of belief, it is almost impossible to form a satisfactory opinion. No matter how much the different sects may vary from one another, each one advances truth that has, of course, a certain amount of plausibility in it, that entitles it to a hearing. The differences are so radical, that it seems almost an impossibility for all to be right. Then where shall we go to have the truth established beyond a doubt? They all seem equally earnest in the advocacy of their different forms. One advocates sprinkling, another pouring, and still another, immersion, as the true

and only mode of baptism. And even the immersionists have a difference. While one class has but one action, another claims three actions to be the apostolic mode. Then, again, there are others who claim that no outward ordinances are necessary. In fact, they entirely cancel all rites and ceremonies in ordinances. Then the strangest thing in all this is, that all take the same book as their instructor in the religious life.

We do not want to cross swords with any Christian body that may differ with us. Neither do we desire to unchristianize those who do not observe the Christian rites just as we do. We are anxious to appear before the world in our proper light. Our great claim is that these ordinances were instituted for the purpose of benefiting the soul, and our present object is to bring out the design of these outward forms. Investigation is the only way by which we can arrive at the truth. We want no guide nor reference but the Bible. In it, we will obtain all the information and facts that will lead us to the mind of God. We claim no superior knowledge, but appeal merely to the common sense of the people, presuming that they have an earnest desire to do the will of God. Our object is not to tear down, but rather to build up a structure that will stand the test of time and eternity.

*A poor soul converted.* Let us suppose, then, the case of one who is convicted of sin, and is anxious to enter the ark of safety, where the storms of eternity can never harm him. The person is not only convicted, but converted. That is, he is convinced that a worldly, selfish life is in direct opposition to the will of God, and having truly repented of former misdeeds, he is not only sorry for them, but he has received a sufficient amount of the spirit of holiness, to make him willing to leave the broad road of wrong-doing, and enter through the strait gate into the narrow way that leads to life eternal. This, of course, will bring about a complete change of life—this is true repentance. Repentance, in its simplest and most primitive definition, means nothing but a change of mind; but a change of mind so radical that a complete change of life is the result.

*Desires to become a child of God.* This poor, earnest soul desires to become a child of God. Knowing that repentance, faith and baptism are necessary to salvation, he starts out to accomplish these. Repentance, we will suppose, has already been accomplished. He believes with all his heart in the Savior of mankind, and is anxious to become his true follower. Here, then, at the threshold of his Christian life, he meets an obstruction. When he comes to baptism, every one has a different

opinion. The claims of each seem to be equally convincing, now what is the poor soul to do? There is only one course open to him, and that is, an appeal to the Bible.

*Meets an obstacle.* In the first place, "baptize" is not an English word, that is, we never use it but in a religious sense. Then if we are unacquainted with the Greek, we are entirely at the mercy of the scholars. However, as they differ very materially, we have no other course open to us than to appeal to the BIBLE itself. The word "baptize" is but the Greek word anglicized, that is, put into an English form. This word is never used in a common way like other words. We must keep in mind, that when Jesus lived, and the apostles wrote, Greek was the leading language of the civilized world. We must not forget this. The Lord Jesus Christ did not use language that was beyond the comprehension of the people to whom he talked. To do so would be unreasonable and the height of folly. Then taking for granted that the people understood the expressions he made use of, those that were ready and willing conformed to his commands. Surely one claiming to be the Son of God, and establishing that claim with the most astonishing miracles the world ever beheld — surely such an one, denying and sacrificing himself as Jesus did, would not trifle with the feelings of

the human family, whom he came to save. We notice, also, how positive and emphatic he was in his assertions, and how explicit in the issue of his commands. Over and over again, he repeated the same requirements, threatening terrible woes upon the heedless and disobedient. Is it possible that such a person as the Bible represents the Lord Jesus Christ to be, would speak unmeaningly? Not one word do we read that the matter of baptism is an optional one on the part of the applicant. The whole difficulty arising out of the differences of opinion concerning the meaning of the Greek word, would never have occurred had the word βαπτίζω been translated. Words are the means by which we make ourselves understood. Therefore, when the Lord employed the words of the language in common use, they meant something. Jesus in ushering in a new dispensation did not want to mystify. *There surely was but one meaning to the word*, or there would have been some disputations. But we hear of no divisions in the early church concerning the mode of baptism. They were a unit in those days. They understood the meaning of the word and so obeyed it. One of the plainest proofs that the people were united on the subject of baptism is, that it is spoken of in the briefest manner possible, as if the word itself was so plain that the people

needed no enlightenment as to how the ordinance of baptism was to be administered. Yet in the record of the church, during and immediately after the life of Jesus, we have certain expressions used that will lead us in the right way during our investigation.

*Why is "baptizo" not translated?* At the very beginning of our investigation, the question presents itself, why did not the translators translate the word *baptizo*, as they did almost all other words? To answer this intelligently, we must appeal to some few facts connected with the history of the translation of the Bible. The Protestant Church had not long thrown off the Roman yoke. She was young, and weak, and consequently very timid. She still somewhat feared the power that had been such a terror to the people of the Middle Ages. When King James sanctioned the new translation, known as the "Authorized Version," he instructed the translators that certain "ecclesiastical" words were not to be interfered with, but should be allowed to remain just as they were at the time. Unfortunately "baptize" was one of these words the translators were instructed not to touch.

*What does it mean?* But to return to the person whom we were supposing to be in earnest search for the truth. We left him struggling amidst the

different practices of baptism by the various bodies of Christians. He concludes to appeal to the Bible itself, and gather therefrom the true mode. As he reads the precious Word of God, he is impressed more and more with the emphasis laid on baptism. He reads Peter's sermon to the Jews at Pentecost, and when at the conclusion, the conscience-stricken thousands cried out, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" he recognizes an exact picture of his own condition. How eagerly he reads the reply, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ." Here, again, the word "baptize" comes to taunt him. His desire to arrive at the truth is greater than ever.

*"Much water" a necessity.* The investigation is continued. In John 3: 23, he reads, "And John also was baptizing in Ænon near to Salim, because there was much water there." This is the first ray of light, and he feels encouraged. Here the student is told the reason of John's selecting Ænon as a place of baptism — because "there was much water there." The natural conclusion was, that "much water" was necessary to baptism.

*The applicant "in" the water.* Then in the record of the baptism of Jesus, it is related in Matthew 3: 16, "And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of

God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him." Here is another step in the attainment of the desired knowledge. Jesus, after the baptism, went up straightway *out of* the water. This, then, is sufficient proof that Jesus was *in* the water. The applicant was required to be *in* the water, to have the rite of baptism administered.

"*Both*" went into the water. In the instance of the baptism of the eunuch, in Acts 8: 38, it is told, "And he [Philip] commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him." Here is another step—the applicant and the administrator were *both in* the water. "And he baptized him," however, does not give the particular mode as clearly as one would wish it to be given. But the word "baptize" is getting somewhat cornered. By this time strong impressions in favor of a particular mode are fast being made upon the mind of the seeker after truth, and even these impressions come without effort and unbidden.

*Every evidence has its weight.* With a strong suggestion in the mind, after reading these incidents of baptism, it was not so difficult to come to a conclusion. The hard part of the work in leading the mind through the first steps toward a certain direction, seems to have been accomplished. The remainder of the work was comparatively easy. It

required so little now, to make the matter a settled fact. Then there is evidence, which of itself would be useless and unconvincing, yet in connection with what has been found out is very corroborative. In all investigations, where it is desired to arrive at a certain fact, there is a kind of evidence that leads the mind to a certain stage, and then other testimony, which, of itself, would be useless and inappropriate, but which, beyond the stage the investigation had reached, is strongly corroborative.

*“Buried” in baptism.* To continue our investigation, Paul says, in Romans 6: 3, 4, “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death.” He says, also, in Colossians 2: 12, “Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God.” This burial implies an overwhelming, a putting out of sight. So now by this illustration of Paul, without any difficulty, we conclude that immersion is the mode of baptism. This idea conflicts with no sentiment that has been uttered. And the more we investigate, the more corroborative evidence is brought to light. The repetition of the assertion, “buried with him in baptism,” at once shows that the expression was not accidental. It rather im-

plies that its peculiar fitness to suit the mode and bring out some beautiful thought in connection with the rite, was so expressive, that it could be repeated. The repetition also implies emphasis. As we proceed and become acquainted with the design of baptism, we will find a fitness in the expression that will be appreciated.

*Immersion is baptism.* Before we go further into our subject, we must not forget to notice that the fact that immersion is the primitive mode of baptism can be further substantiated by substituting the meaning for the word itself. Take, for instance, the expression found in the record of the baptism of the eunuch, "And he baptized him." What we assert in this respect, we say with all deference to the opinions of others, and we mean no disrespect to anyone. The cause of truth demands that all the evidence that can be brought to bear on the subject under hand, should be produced. Let us, then, substitute "sprinkle" for "baptize" in the above assertion, and see how it sounds: "*And he sprinkled him.*" This is an impossibility. How can a man be sprinkled? We can sprinkle water or dust upon the man, but we cannot sprinkle the man—at least, unless he was ground to powder. Then let us try the word "pour": "*And he poured him.*" Here is another impossibility. To pour a man, it would be neces-

sary to dissolve him in strong acids into a liquid. But as soon as we substitute the true meaning, the sentence is comprehensive: "*And he immersed him.*" That is just what he did. We see no difficulty in grasping this. This, then, agrees with the idea of "much water," and going "into" the water. Thus, little by little, by a fair, unprejudiced investigation of the evidence, the truth will always be attained.

## CHAPTER VII.

### BAPTISM IS IMMERSION.

Faith-and-practice worship—The baptism of the three thousand—  
The Pentecostal out-pouring of the Spirit—The baptism of  
Lydia—The Philippian jailer—An instance of gospel repent-  
ance—The plainness of apostolic preaching.

*“And there went out unto him all the land of Judæa, and they of Jerusalem, and were  
all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins.”* Mark 1: 5.

*Faith-and-practice worship.* It is very difficult to account for the many views that exist concerning baptism. The majority of professing Christians cling very tenaciously to their particular way. Many strongly barricade all the avenues of approach, and resist to the death, all attempts that may be made to storm their citadel of belief. Too many of us consider the teachings of our youth, and the particular faith which we have inherited from our good parents, as sacred—yea, so sacred are they, that to entertain the shadow of doubt would be the grossest sacrilege. So, often this strong adherence to a certain faith and practice actually becomes worship. We believe the will of God should control the actions of the church. We have been endowed with intellect, and all the privileges that are necessary to the full comprehension

of our duties. To barricade the heart, and the will, and the intelligence, against all evidence that may cause us to change our minds, is far from right. There is a feature of faith-and-practice worship that is really sinful, and begets narrowness and ostracism. There is a line beyond which there is danger. The will of God must be supreme, and we must bend intellect, heart, and soul, and all, to it. To bend the will of God to suit our ideas and preferences does not manifest a childlike spirit, which we are told the followers of Jesus must possess.

*Preponderance of evidence in favor of immersion.* The preponderance of evidence, both biblical and otherwise, is largely in favor of immersion as the mode of Christian baptism. As already said in a previous chapter, when once the evidence has led the mind to the formation of an opinion, or only to lean in the direction of an opinion, then an abundance of evidence will loom up, which, of itself, would not be convincing, but, as corroborative evidence, has its weight.

*The baptism of the three thousand.* We will notice, first, that wherever an instance of baptism is recorded, the circumstances are such that they will not conflict with the idea of immersion. Neither, perhaps, may they conflict with the idea of sprinkling or pouring; but we shall see. We have already

noticed how immersion suits in the case of the eunuch\*. But let us go back and begin at Pentecost. In Acts 2: 41, we are told, "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." It has been very boldly asserted that immersion under these circumstances would have been impossible. One ground of objection is that there would not have been water enough in the city of Jerusalem to permit of immersion. Then, again, it was considered that the time was too short for twelve persons to baptize so many; and others thought the actual physical effort was so great that the administrators would be prostrated before so large a number were baptized. But what a fallacy all this is! Not enough of water in Jerusalem? Here, during the year, the people congregated by tens of thousands, from all parts of the world, to "keep the feasts." Where did they obtain water to supply the persons and their beasts of burden on such occasions? In the Bible we read of the Pool of Bethesda, the King's Pool, the Upper Pool, the Old Pool, the Pool of Siloam. These pools are merely mentioned in the course of the narrative, as the circumstances demanded. But the Bible was not written with the idea of settling disputed questions, so we do not expect a complete catalogue

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\*See pages 73 and 75.

of all the pools and cisterns in the metropolis. Josephus tells of a deep canal that ran through the city. Then, referring to the abundance of water in Judea, we read in Deuteronomy 8: 7: "For the Lord thy God bringeth thee into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills." The ruins of numerous cisterns and pools can be seen by the traveler to-day. Besides this, we are not given the details of the matter, so we do not know how and where it was done. The sermon was preached early in the morning, it being only the third hour of the day (Acts 2: 15); and there was an abundance of time for them to go to the Jordan, which was only thirteen miles distant. Then, as to the fatigue to the administrators in the performance of this rite: this is but a strong argument in favor of trine immersion and the forward action. In the baptism of the applicant by a single, backward action, it requires much physical effort. By the forward action, there is little, or actually no effort, on the part of the administrator. The applicant kneels in the water, and, while kneeling, the head is submerged three times, in the name of each person of the Trinity. Then, as to the argument that it was impossible to baptize three thousand in one day, we must not forget that Peter had a great deal of help. There were at least twelve

of them, and probably a great many more. In Acts 1: 15, we read that the number of disciples who were waiting for the fulfillment of the promise of Jesus, was one hundred and twenty. Now, if there were only twelve, this would make it about two hundred and fifty for each one to baptize. If there were one hundred and twenty, there were only twenty-five for each man. The record is silent as to how many administrators there were that day. One thing is certain, however,—it was done, and done satisfactorily. The late Dean Stanley, in his “Christian Institution,” tells us that in the early church, thousands of pilgrims would flock to the Jordan, and, having provided themselves with baptismal robes, would plunge into the water and baptize themselves. Some one suggests that it may be possible that they did this at Pentecost. I was present one time when forty-two were baptized in so many minutes. I have frequently baptized five, six, eight, and ten, in a little less than that many minutes. So that these objections as to time, lack of water, and so forth, are not unanswerable arguments.

*The Pentecostal out-pouring of the Spirit.* A common and, at first sight, a formidable argument against immersion, is the incident of the out-pouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. John the Baptist, during his brief ministry, prophesied con-

cerning Christ, "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire" (Matt. 3:11). This prophecy is considered by a great many to be identical with that of Joel 2:28: "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh." Thus, according to their interpretation, "pour" and "baptize" are synonyms. Then when they point to the fact as recorded in the 2d chapter of Acts, it places the subject beyond all doubt in their minds. But how radically do we differ! What these good people will claim as an evidence that pouring is baptism, we claim as an evidence in favor of immersion. We will, for argument's sake, admit that these prophecies are identical, but we cannot admit that the two words are synonyms, although, in this instance, it is in favor of our view of the question. Acts 2:2, tells us that the Spirit was poured out until "*it filled all the house*" where they were sitting. This then submerged them, and so it turns out to be a clear case of immersion after all.

*The baptism of Lydia.* This instance is recorded in the 16th chapter of the Acts. If we recognize a difficulty in arriving at the exact meaning of βαπτίζω, then it would be a difficult task to decide whether

this was an instance of immersion, or otherwise; but we still maintain that there is nothing here that conflicts with the idea of immersion. On the contrary, the possibility of immersion is strengthened. In verse 13, the writer says, "And on the sabbath we went out of the city *by a river side*, where prayer was wont to be made; and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted thither." A conversion by the river side, and an immediate baptism, seem reasonably to permit of the idea of immersion, or, at least, we find nothing here that places it beyond the pale of possibility.

*The Philippian jailer.* The case of the Philippian jailer is represented by many ministers as an instance where baptism was immediately performed *in* the house, and the natural conclusion they draw from this is, that it was done by sprinkling or pouring, as immersion would have been impracticable *in* the house. Thus, no doubt, it may appear to many honest people, who carelessly read the record of the incident. But by a careful study of the circumstance, we will see that at the time of the baptism, they were positively *not in* the house. The language is so precise that it removes every doubt on this subject. When the jailer sprang into the presence of Paul and Silas, and found they had not made their escape, he fell down before them, "and BROUGHT THEM OUT and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" (Acts 16: 30.)

Taking them out of the jail, we naturally suppose he escorted them to his own residence, for in verse 32, it is asserted, "They spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were *in the house*." Having brought them to his own house, where the sermon setting forth the duties of the followers of the Lord was preached, the jailer did not allow them to remain there. Paul's sermon must have been very plain and practical, because we find the jailer performing two very important duties. Indeed these duties are an epitome of the Christian religion. Herein we find a substantial illustration of the whole of God's law as interpreted by our Savior, when he said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself." For "*he took them the same hour of the night*, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway." He "took them" where there was water, and we cannot be considered very radical when we assert that he "took them" where there was an abundance of water; for the fact that he washed their wounds there seems to imply it. This fact of the jailer taking them out of the house for baptism is generally overlooked. Whatever doubt may linger in the heart as to whether this is true, is at once silenced by the very next verse, where we read,

*“And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them.”* He must have taken them out of the house, or there would have been no necessity for bringing them back to enjoy his hospitality.

*An instance of gospel repentance.* The two duties referred to are repentance and baptism. A few hours before this the jailer manifested a brutal spirit, when we find him administering a cruel punishment to the apostles—probably more so than was commanded by the magistrates. He bound them with chains and made their feet fast in the stocks, while he was merely commanded to keep them safely. No doubt this was in accordance with his heathen nature. But how rapidly and completely the scene changes! Now we see him tenderly bathing the wounds his cruelty had inflicted. This was restitution in a very substantial sense. He was now endeavoring to undo the harm he had done. While he could not cure the flesh-wounds immediately, the wounds his blows had inflicted on the heart were instantly healed by his kindness. Then baptism was administered. But notice that repentance and consequently restitution came first. Thus kindness and practical sympathy are the first fruits of the Christian religion. There is no better illustration of repentance to be found than in the conduct of this converted heathen. The sermon of Paul must have been very

plain and pointed, or the result would not have been so complete and instantaneous. The submission to baptism was the expression of willingness to yield to the Lord's command. This is a very practical way of manifesting love and duty to God, for it is the Lord's way. Then, we may again call attention to the hospitable spirit that was here shown so soon after conversion. These actions seal the sincerity of the convert beyond all doubt.

*The plainness of apostolic preaching.* We wish to call attention to the preaching of Paul to the jailer, and of Philip to the eunuch. Both must have been very emphatic and plain about baptism. Whatever objection may be found in these modern times to those ministers who still preach the gospel of baptism, as well as that of faith and repentance, these are two precedents of great authority. In the case of Philip, as they came to a body of water at the close of his sermon, the eunuch said, "See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?" Then, in the case before us, as soon as the sermon was over, the no longer heathen, but now converted jailer, took the apostles to some water, and after showing that his repentance was of a true gospel type, by his complete change of heart and conduct, he was baptized. This, as well as the other instance, we can plainly see, does not conflict with the idea of immersion.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### INFANT BAPTISM.

Households—A Sunday-school incident—Faith and repentance precede baptism—"Suffer little children to come unto me"—Not a saving ordinance—They are to "come."

*"Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God."* Mark 10 : 14.

*"Households."* In the discussion of the subject of baptism, we cannot consistently overlook infant baptism, which is so much practiced by the modern churches. There surely is not one positive instance of infant baptism in the whole of the Scriptures. The two instances recorded in the 16th chapter of Acts, which we have just noticed, is often used as evidence for the baptism of children. In the case of Lydia, it is so considered, because it is stated that she and her "household" were baptized. The same, too, is recorded of the jailer. As their whole "households" were baptized, it is presumed by all those who favor the baptism of children, that there must have been some in both families.

*A Sunday-school incident.* The argument I wish to introduce here may be best presented by relating a little incident. I once superintended a

“Union” Sunday-school, where it was understood that no one should teach any sectarian views. One Sunday when the lesson happened to be on this chapter (Acts 16), I was listening to the classes recite, when I heard a good Pedobaptist brother teaching his class the necessity of infant baptism. In the review questions, I asked the school how many infants were in the “household” of Lydia. “We don’t know,” was the ready response. “Neither do I,” was my reply. Then I asked how many infants were in the family of the jailer. Again, “We don’t know,” was the response. Then I said, “I do—there were none.” By the way of explanation, I said that in the case of Lydia we were left in the dark; but that this was not the case with the jailer. In verse 34, we are told that he “rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.” Here was an instance where all the members of the family “believed” in the Lord. The process of belief was impossible to unconscious infants, whose undeveloped minds were incapable of exercising faith. Then, as an evidence for infant baptism, these instances fall to the ground.

*Faith and repentance precede baptism.* Belief and repentance, according to the teaching of John the Baptist, Christ, and the apostles, must precede baptism. In no instance is this trinity of principles separated. Not one instance is there given

in the Scriptures that true Gospel baptism is valid without a previous change of heart, and a complete confidence in the Lord. The very fact that repentance and faith are necessary to baptism, rules out the baptism of babes. Baptism is a positive act of faith on the part of the convert.

*“Suffer the little children to come unto me.”* How often is this passage quoted as an authority for the baptism of infants. In my mind it is the strongest evidence against it. The passage reads “Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God.” The first part of this quotation may do well enough, but the latter at once condemns it. Although, probably, this saying of Jesus was only intended to be applied to the immediate circumstance which brought it forth; yet it has been given a wider and more general application. In this more general application, then, we will have to consider it, as it has been used as an authority for infant baptism. We are to suffer little children to come to him, and we are not to hinder them under any circumstances. Why? “For of such is the kingdom of God.” If these are already in the “kingdom of God,” which the words plainly imply, what good does the baptism do? Besides this, do we not, in reality, contradict the Lord’s assertion, when we consider baptism essential to

the child's salvation, when he says positively, "of such is the kingdom of God"? Do we not, in one sense of the expression, "forbid them" when we say, although perhaps not wilfully, yet none the less positively, that they are not "of the kingdom of God" until baptism has been administered? These are questions that should be well considered. The Gospel of Jesus appeals to the heart and understanding, and is only intended for those who are able to comprehend it, and grasp the principles to make them their standard of life. Baptism is the seal of our faith in God, and as we get into the consideration of its design, we will see how useless is the rite administered to innocent babes.

*Not a saving ordinance.* Baptism, decidedly, is not a saving ordinance. This is not only contrary to the principles of the Gospel according to Jesus, but it is also a violation of the laws of reason and common sense. Reason and the gospel do not conflict. If baptism is a saving ordinance, then the church, to do her whole duty, should go out and baptize all people whether they are willing or not. If it is a saving ordinance, then no matter what sins may be committed, the baptized will be saved. Man is turned into a machine. The preaching and general acceptance of this doctrine would be a license to all kinds of wickedness. We everywhere see, by the teachings of Jesus, that the

gospel is an appeal to the finer and grander principles of the heart, and is intended to lift man up until, in his attributes, he will be more God-like. The principle taught here of baptizing unwilling subjects is rather an imposition upon the revelation of God.

*They are "to come."* When we read the passage over carefully, can we not see in it a new meaning, "Suffer little children *to come* unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God"? Does not this refer to the innocent child, who is budding out into riper years, and verging on the age of comprehension? When the children grow old enough to grasp at the teachings of Christianity, then we should, by all means, encourage them "to come" to the Savior, and enjoy the shelter and blessedness of religion. By no means should there be any obstacles thrown in the way to prevent them from so coming. In their guilelessness and innocence, they were "of the kingdom of heaven;" but now, as age creeps on them, and they battle with the temptations of life, they are in danger of going out of the "kingdom." Jesus wants them "to come" to him. Then we must not forbid them. The word "come" implies their ability to desire and choose. If it had reference to babes, would they not rather be "brought" than *come* of their own accord?

## CHAPTER IX.

### WHAT DOES THE ORIGINAL WORD MEAN?

The Greek word means immerse—It means immerse in the Old Testament—When used metaphorically it means immerse—When really translated it means immerse—The Greek language very expressive—Pouring, sprinkling, and immersing in the Bible—Evidence of early Christian fathers.

*Search the scriptures.—John 5: 39.*

*The Greek word means immerse.* To corroborate what has already been said concerning baptism, it may be profitable to appeal to the original word itself, and the testimony of eminent scholars and theologians, and a reference to other evidence, which, perhaps, by itself, would not be considered very convincing.

Parkhurst, in his lexicon, defines βαπτίζω, “to dip, immerse, plunge in water.” Greenleaf’s lexicon translates it, “to submerge, immerse, sink; in the New Testament, to wash, perform ablution, to cleanse.” Donegan renders the word, “to immerse repeatedly into a liquid, to submerge, to sink; also, to plunge, to cleanse, to wash.” Stephanus gives the meaning of it, “to dip, immerse, as we immerse things for the purpose of coloring or washing, to

merge, submerge, to cover with water, to cleanse, to wash." Adler's German and English dictionary translates the anglicized *baptize* into the German word *taufen*, and then *taufen* is explained as meaning "to dip." But it is not necessary to multiply this kind of testimony, for no scholar would risk his reputation by contradicting this rendering of *baptizo*.

Dean Stanley, a high dignitary of the Church of England, and one of the brightest scholars of the age, says in his *Christian Institutions*, "For the first thirteen centuries the almost universal practice of baptism was that of which we read in the New Testament, and which is the very meaning of the word baptize—that those who were baptized were plunged, submerged, immersed into the water."

*It means immerse in the Old Testament.* Wherever this word is used in the Old Testament it means immerse. In the Greek version of the Bible the term *baptizo* is found only twice. One of those places is II. Kings 5: 14, and is translated "dipped." The verse, which explains itself, reads thus: "'Then went he down, and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God.'" The other place where we find the word, it is used metaphorically. Parkhurst says, in giving the meaning of this passage in Isaiah

21: 4, in the original Greek, "Iniquity *plungeth* me." Our authorized version renders this passage, "My heart panted, fearfulness *affrighted* me." Parkhurst puts the metaphor within our comprehension, and gives it, "Iniquity *plungeth* me," that is, *into terror and distress*. Thus the leading meaning of *baptizo* is not lost sight of.

*When used metaphorically it means immerse.* Baptize is used in the New Testament in a figurative sense. These metaphorical uses of the word turn out to be testimony in favor of baptism being immersion. In Matthew 20: 22, we read, "And Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink the cup that I shall drink of, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" Then again, in Luke 12: 50, we are referred to the same sentiment of our Lord: "But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" These, beyond doubt, refer to his sufferings and death. The literal meaning of *baptizo* is not lost; but, on the contrary, is very prominent in this metaphorical application. Dr. Doddridge, an eminent authority, paraphrases this passage in Matthew thus: "Are ye able to drink of the bitter cup of which I am now about to drink so deep, and to be baptized with the baptism, and to be plunged into that sea of sufferings with which I am shortly to be bap-

tized, and as it were overwhelmed for a time?" Here from the testimony of a Pedobaptist we are told how, even when used in a metaphorical sense, the literal meaning is held prominent. And on the passage from Luke he says, "I have indeed a most dreadful baptism to be baptized with, and know that I shall shortly be bathed, as it were, in blood, and plunged into the most overwhelming distress." Dr. Priestly comments on the same passage (Luke) as meaning, "I have a baptism to be baptized with; alluding to his death, in which he was to be, as it were, *plunged*." Wesley also viewed the matter in the same light. Like Luther, he believed immersion was the original way, but that sprinkling would do. So also is the metaphorical meaning of the word when applied to the church receiving the Holy Spirit. The baptism with the Holy Spirit is a figurative expression of which the idea of immersion is the foundation. The figure is full of meaning. Whatever is immersed in a liquid is somewhat or completely impregnated or imbued with its virtue. So then when one is immersed with the Holy Spirit, he is imbued with the great principle the name implies. Just as when one is immersed in water the water clings to him, and he is spoken of as being wet. So when we are baptized with the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit clings to us. Thus the figure has an importance and strength.

*When really translated it means "immerse."* There are places in the New Testament where the word is really translated. When this is the case it invariably means immersion. Take the passage of Luke 11: 38, which reads, "And when the Pharisee saw it, he marvelled that he had not first washed before dinner." The word "washed" translated is ἐβαπτίσθη, and Wilson, in his *Emphatic Diaglott*, translates the verse, "And the Pharisee, noticing it, wondered that he did not first immerse before dinner." So also is it in Mark 7: 4, "And when they come from the market, except they wash, they eat not. And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, as the washing of cups and pots, brassen vessels, and of tables." *Baptisontai* and *baptismous* are the Greek words used in this verse. In the eighth verse of the same chapter, the same thing occurs. Thus it is seen wherever the word *baptizo* does not refer directly to the ordinance of Christian baptism, it is translated *washed*.

*The Greek language very expressive.* Throughout the whole scriptures, wherever a certain desire is expressed there is a word to suit. The Greek language is rich in expression and variety, and especially is this so in words that are used in connection with the use of water. As long as we cling to the close meaning of the words there is no danger of getting

confused. There is *νίπτω*, to wash as used in John 13: 5, 6; *παρτίζω*, to sprinkle, found in Hebrew 9: 13; *ἐκχέω*, to pour, as in Acts 2: 17; *βρέχω*, to wet, as in Luke 7: 38; *πλύνω*, to wash properly, as clothes, by plunging them in water, as used in Revelation 7: 14; *λούω*, to wash the body, as in John 13: 10; *βαπτίζω*, to dip, immerse or plunge in water, II. Kings 5: 14; *βάπτω*, to dip, plunge, immerse, John 13: 26. Now it is very easy to see that if Christ wanted to simply imply that water should be sprinkled, he would have used the word *rantizo*. Had he wished to express the thought of wetting or moistening, *brecho* would have been used. Is it not reasonable for us to conclude that if Jesus intended to imply sprinkling or pouring as the mode of baptism, he would have passed by *rantizo* and *ekcheo* and use another word which means "to dip?"

*Pouring, sprinkling and immersing in the Bible.* In the Bible, the Old Testament especially, the different commands for the application of liquids are very definite. For instance, in Leviticus 2: 1, the Israelites were plainly told, "And when any will offer a meat offering unto the Lord, his offering shall be of fine flour; and he shall *pour* oil upon it, and put frankincense thereon." In Numbers 24: 7, it is said, "He shall *pour* the water out of his buckets." So also in I. Kings 18: 33, we read: "And he put the wood in order, and cut the bul-

lock in pieces, and laid him on the wood, and said, Fill four barrels with water, and *pour* it on the burnt sacrifice, and on the wood." In Exodus 29: 7, it is commanded, "Then shalt thou take the anointing oil, and *pour* it upon his head, and anoint him." Then in Numbers 8: 7 it is said: "And thus shalt thou do unto them, to cleanse them: *Sprinkle* water of purifying upon them." In Leviticus 14: 15, 16 we find three different kinds of applications definitely mentioned, "And the priest shall take some of the log of oil and *pour* it into the palm of his own left hand: and the priest shall *dip* his right finger in the oil that is in his left hand, and shall *sprinkle* of the oil with his finger seven times before the Lord." So we might also refer to many other passages, even in the New Testament, where these forms of application of liquids are plainly mentioned. In the face of all this then, how can we consistently believe that the plain Greek word *baptize* is meaningless or has several optional meanings? Beyond doubt the word has a definite meaning, and the Lord Jesus intended that the Christian ordinance termed "baptism," should be performed in accordance with the general meaning of the word.

*Evidence of early Christian fathers.* During the apostolic age, and immediately after, we have abundance of evidence showing that Christian baptism was performed by immersion. In the epistle

of Barnabas, whom many authors think to be the same Barnabas referred to by Paul, it is said, "Blessed are they who, putting their trust in Christ, descend into the water. We go down into the water full of sin and pollutions, but come up again bringing forth fruit, having in our hearts the fear and hope which is in Jesus by the Spirit."—*Wake's Apostolic Fathers*, p. 142. Again on page 211, Hermes is quoted as saying, "I have even now heard from certain teachers that there is no other repentance besides that of baptism, when we go down into the water and receive forgiveness of our sins; and after that we must sin no more, but live in purity." On page 258, he again says, "Now that seal is the water of baptism, into which men go down under the obligation unto death, but come appointed unto life."

Now with all this array of evidence, and much more of the same kind that could be produced, we are naturally led to conclude that the word *baptizo* as uttered by the Lord had no other meaning than that of immersion. No matter from what source or in what direction we investigate we always arrive at the same conclusion. Before advancing to the next step of the form of baptism, it may be profitable to once more commence from another direction, and by following up the argument and evidence, strengthen the assertion that true Christian baptism is immersion, and can only be truly carried out in immersion.

## CHAPTER X.

### TYPE AND ANTITYPE.

The object of the Old Law—Sprinkling in the Bible—Pouring in the Bible—Is a type of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit—“Washing with water” in the Bible—Is typical of the washing of regeneration—Everything fulfilled in Christ.

*“Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean.”—Ezekiel 36: 25.*

*The object of the old law.* Paul says “The law was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ.” By this we understand that through the ceremonies and laws, which God, through Moses, commanded and taught the old Jews, it was intended to open up the soul to receive the grand and higher principles to be revealed and taught by Jesus. The mind and heart of man is susceptible to this kind of teaching. Time and experience have developed the fact that the understanding can be more easily reached through object lessons. This was the Lord’s principal way of inculcating the divine truth into the hearts of his hearers. His parables are merely mental pictures drawn before the imagination to illustrate the facts of salvation. Every ceremony in the Jewish law has its antitype in the new dispensation of Christ. Thus the law becomes

truly a schoolmaster to lead the soul into the green pastures of the gospel. The law and history of the Jews is a type of better things. The history of the Jews, as chronicled by Moses, is only the history of every soul that leaves the bondage of sin for the freedom of the gospel. The terrible thralldom in Egypt, the coming forward of Moses as the great deliverer to lead the chosen people beyond the power of wicked Pharaoh, the exciting relation of the origin of the Passover, the crossing of the Red Sea, the march through the wilderness, the raining of the manna, the crossing of the Jordan, the entrance into Canaan, and every other incident in the experience of this people have a deep spiritual signification. So also have the rites and ceremonies as taught by Moses. While these ceremonies, to us, seem useless or shrouded in mystery, yet by looking at them as the means of opening the heart and mind to heavenly truths, they are a mine of riches and a store of wisdom. These ceremonies are types of the glad tidings of the gospel. Paul tells us, in Hebrews 10: 1, that the law was a "shadow of good things to come." With respect to the Christian institution under consideration, it will be profitable to notice a few of the ceremonies under the Mosaic dispensation, and their very plain application to the spiritual, as revealed by Jesus Christ. This may open a vein

of thought that may result in a better comprehension of the plan of salvation.

*Sprinkling in the Bible.* As sprinkling has become a very important feature in Christian experience, it would be well for us to look at it, in all its bearings and teachings in the Jewish dispensation, and endeavor to find its antitype and object in the gospel. The reason we thus select sprinkling, pouring and immersion in all their various applications under the law of God in these olden times, is because they have deep signification in the salvation of the soul.

(a) *In the consecration of the priests.* In Numbers 8: 7, the ceremony of setting apart the Levites for the special service of the Lord is unfolded to us, and Moses was thus commanded to "cleanse them;" "sprinkle water of purifying upon them, and let them shave all their flesh, and let them wash their clothes, and so make themselves clean." Then again, in Exodus 29: 21, we find quite a different and a very emphatic ceremony in the consecration of Aaron and his sons, which, no doubt, was on account of the more exalted importance of the office and work expected of them. It reads: "And thou shalt take of the blood that is upon the altar, and of the anointing oil, and sprinkle it upon Aaron, and upon his garments, and upon his sons, and upon

the garments of his sons with him: and he shall be hallowed, and his garments, and his sons, and his sons' garments with him." Here are two instances of sprinkling, one of the water of purifying, the other of oil and blood, and we must notice that the object of both was to cleanse and purify. Nothing can be more plainly stated than the object of this sprinkling.

(b) *In the cleansing of defiled persons.* Here is another feature of sprinkling under the old law. We should not lose sight of the gradation. First, the sprinkling of blood on Aaron, the high priest, and his sons, then the sprinkling of specially prepared water upon the Levites, and now we have more general application to all persons who need it. In Numbers 19: 19 it is said, "And the clean person shall sprinkle upon the unclean on the third day, and on the seventh day." Then in Leviticus 14: 7 we read, "And he shall sprinkle upon him that is to be cleansed from the leprosy seven times, and shall pronounce him clean." The defilement or uncleanness is typical of sin, and thus the cleansing rites of the Jews have a deep signification. Especially may leprosy be looked upon as representing sin in all its hideousness. The actual cleansing of the body may have been of little use, yet the lesson it taught was very plain. It was impossible for one to come in close contact with that

which was unclean or diseased without becoming somewhat contaminated. To be free from these contaminations, it was best to remain beyond the reach of that which would defile. But if defilement did occur there was a way opened by which the parties could be cleansed. This reveals to us and makes prominent mercy, as the great feature in the economy of grace.

(c) *The manner of preparing this "clean" water.* There is not one instance in the whole Bible where simple water, unmixed with any other material, is used to sprinkle upon man. Therefore the water used to cleanse was always prepared, and the manner of preparation is significant. In Numbers 19: 17 we are told, "And for an unclean person they shall take the ashes of the burnt heifer [referred to in verses 1-5] of purification for sin, and running water shall be put thereto in a vessel." This is the clean or purifying water of the text and of Isaiah 52: 15, and which finds its antitype in the blood of Jesus. This is very emphatically recognized by the author of the Hebrews (chapter 9: 13, 14) thus: "For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: how much more shall the blood of Christ?" We have seen that the sprinkling of prepared water was a purifying and cleansing from defilement under the

Mosaic law. The defilement of the body, as understood by the Jews, was a true type of the defilement of the soul. So the process of cleansing the soul from the defilement of sin by the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus. It can easily be seen what a terrible mistake it is to substitute water, pure and simple, in place of the blood of Christ. Christ himself, as the officiating great High Priest, will sprinkle us with his own blood. Thus, then, we see the sprinkling of water for the cleansing of uncleanness is a type of the blood of Christ.

*Pouring in the Bible.* Under the old law anointing was a very important ceremony. It was an act of consecration and dedication to the service of Jehovah. When any person was placed in a position of importance and trust, he was invariably inaugurated by being anointed with oil. By this ceremony he was set apart and empowered for the special duties of the office. It was commanded Moses, concerning the consecration of Aaron: "Then shalt thou take the anointing oil, and pour it upon his head, and anoint him" (Exodus 29: 7).

*Is a type of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.* The ceremony of anointing has its important meaning. It can easily be recognized as the type of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The very name of our Lord actually implies this, for the very name of Jesus Christ literally rendered, is *the anointed*

*Savior.* Then Peter, in his sermon before Cornelius, (Acts 10: 38), says, "How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power." This explanation places it beyond doubt. Looking at the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, as the antitype, it can readily be seen how this divine gift of the Spirit qualifies man for the duties of the new life. By the anointing of the Spirit we become priests unto God. Thus the pouring or anointing of the Bible has its antitype in the gospel dispensation, and by the administration of baptism by pouring, we make the mistake of substituting water for Spirit.

*"Washing with water" in the Bible.* Immersion, bathing or washing with water as a religious ordinance was well known to the old Jews. Along with the sprinkling and pouring it formed a part of the consecration services of the priest. Aaron and his sons were directed to be "washed with water" (Exodus 29: 4 and 40: 12). Then again in the fourteenth and fifteenth chapters of Leviticus we find that bathing in water is commanded for cleansing the unclean.

*Is typical of the washing of regeneration.* During the centuries long before the gospel dispensation was ushered into the world, the finger of prophecy and type pointed to these ordinances that form the foundation of Christianity. Like the sprinkling

and pouring already noticed in this chapter, the washing with water has its part in the economy of grace. To show what emphasis Jesus and the apostles placed upon this ceremony, and how they understood its object and significance, we will call attention to Hebrews 10: 22: "Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water." Then as to its object, what plainer words can be found than the testimony of Paul before his fellow-countrymen at Jerusalem? He rehearses his conversion and gives the words of Ananias (Acts 22: 16), "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." And again, in reply to the cry of the multitude at Pentecost, it was told them, (Acts 2: 38), "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Then again, bristling with grand thoughts, come the words of Jesus to Nicodemus: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3: 5). These passages of Scripture place the matter beyond all doubt, and the old Jewish ceremony finds its antitype in baptism.

*Everything fulfilled in Christ.* There is a beautiful harmony in the Bible that can only be recognized when we read the Old and New Testaments with the view of beholding the hand of God. We must keep in mind that the sprinkling of the clarified or purified water, and the pouring or anointing of the oil, and the washing with water were performed upon the *priests*. These ceremonies were observed and carried out at their consecration to the service of the Lord. The superiority of the gospel dispensation over the old Jewish system, is shown by the exalted privileges that belong to every one who accepts Christ. Only the priests were permitted to come into the temple and take part in the services. But in the gospel *we all become priests*, enjoying the privileges that were forbidden to the common people. The heart of man becomes the temple of God, and each one officiates for himself. We need no one to carry our offerings to the Lord for us; we can take them ourselves. See how grandly these facts are brought out in the Revelation of John. In chapter 1: 6 we learn that Jesus Christ "hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father." Then in chapter 20: 6 the same truth is reiterated: "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ." So we find that the sprink-

ling, pouring, and immersing of the old Jewish priests is fully carried out in the new dispensation, and the ceremonies have a higher and more spiritual signification. The sprinkling of the water is fulfilled in the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus. The anointing or pouring is again carried out in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Then again, the washing with water is fulfilled in baptism. To substitute the one for the other is to take away the signification as taught in the Lord's dealings with the Israelites. We must keep always in view that the history of the Jewish nation, as given in the old Bible, is but the experience of every child of God, magnified. We shall call attention to this fact in a subsequent chapter, and shall see how beautifully all harmonizes. And who is man that he shall stand up to contradict these beautiful teachings?

## CHAPTER XI.

### TRINE IMMERSION.

The first law of heaven—Baptism emphasized in the Gospel—  
“One baptism”—Kneeling in the water—Baptized by forward  
action in the Father’s name—And in the Son’s name.

*“Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”*  
Matt. 28: 19.

*The first law of heaven.* Order, regularity, and method, are not only laws of God, but men also recognize and observe them as essential to success and comfort. We behold systematic arrangement above, beneath, and around us, wherever we find the handiwork of Jehovah. Then why should there be an exception to this rule in the realm of religion? The regularity and order in the physical world is the foundation of science. Implicit confidence and dependence upon the immutability and permanence of these unchangeable laws, have brought to us all the appliances and improvements that make this age superior to the past. Science, or knowledge of the laws of nature, reveals to us the beautiful harmony to be found in all creation. These laws were created for the comfort and happiness of man. The crowning work of the creation is man in his corporeal, mental, and spiritual

nature. Very many of the advantages of that which we term *Nature*, such as the law of astronomy in regulating the light and the seasons; the law of gravitation in maintaining the equilibrium of all material; the law of growth in developing and maturing that which is to feed and strengthen; the law of mechanics in bringing about inventions and improvements that give us so many comforts and luxuries; these all seem to be exclusively for the benefit of the corporeal and mental part of man. The spiritual, the infinite, the most important part of his being, is not provided for in the natural world. In the same proportion that the spiritual exceeds the carnal in humanity, does the revelation of religion in bringing to our knowledge the comforts and joys of eternity, exceed the revelation of science in enlightening us for the enjoyment and pleasure of the body. If, then, we find system and method in the realm of nature, we must expect to find the same harmony and regularity in a superlative degree in the realm of the supernatural. Science appeals to the mind, religion to the soul. Science and its benefits are the result of thought, religion and its blessings are the result of faith. The benefits of science are obtained through man's own efforts, the blessings of religion are obtained through the mercy of God. Let us then remember that religion is a direct revelation from

God, independent of the knowledge of man. "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."

*Baptism emphasized in the Gospel.* God and not man is the author of the plan of salvation. Let us then study well his revelation, that we may grasp the principles that are to develop our manhood. We have emphasized the ordinance of Christian baptism, because the Lord has emphasized it. The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ is ushered in by a Baptist. Baptism is the *first teaching* and example of Christ himself; and it is also the *last command* he gave his sorrowing disciples. After the resurrection of Jesus, as the disciples stood up to preach their first sermon before the multitude at Pentecost, in reply to the cry of the conscience-stricken people, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" the answer was, "Repent and be baptized." As we have had no repeal of this law from the great Law-giver, we cannot be blamed if we still lay the same emphasis on this ordinance that we find laid upon it by the Lord himself and his apostles.

"*One baptism.*" In what manner shall immersion be administered? is not an irrelevant question. If we observe order and method in other spheres in which man moves, we must naturally expect to find that which is said to be "the first law of heaven"

in our application of religion here. This order and system is noticed and emphasized by the great apostle of the Gentiles more than once, especially where he announces, "One faith, one Lord, one baptism." If there is but one form of baptism, it is very essential that we make every effort to strike the right one, and then cling to it. We have the opportunity and advantage of his direct Word. Then let us bring down all the powers of our mind and heart, and reach out for the truth.

*Kneeling in the water.* The last command of our Lord to his followers was that they should go forth, and "disciple," or make followers of "all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." This is the most direct and definite instruction concerning baptism we have in the whole Gospel. Therefore, we find all Christian bodies, no matter what their practice may be, using these words as their formula in the administration of the rite. Can we, now, throw aside all preconceived ideas, and analyze these words as they stand before us in all their plainness? We have seen that the preponderance of evidence has been in favor of immersion. Since it is decided to immerse, we naturally ask, In what posture shall the body be placed? Although it may make but little difference, yet it is necessary to decide upon something, and in our decision let

us be governed by the general principles of Christianity. We may have no definite command on the subject, yet there surely is one posture that would be more appropriate than any other. It is for that which is most appropriate and most in accord with the Gospel that we are in search. Humility is one of the cardinal principles of the Gospel. We find it taught on every page of the Gospel and in every incident in the life of Jesus. Then, that posture which will most accord with the feelings of the heart, will surely be the most appropriate. What humbler posture can the body assume than that of kneeling? So, when in the water, the applicant kneels in reverence before God. If there is one time more than another in which the soul should be humble, it is during this God-appointed ordinance that ushers us into the fold of Christ.

*Baptized by forward action in the Father's name.* The applicant is now kneeling in the water awaiting the further observance of the ordinance. How will the administrator proceed? He will, of course, first, respect the direction of our Lord which heads this chapter, and which is the formula universally used wherever the rite of baptism is observed. Therefore we hear him say, "By the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, I baptize you in the name of the Father." Now, according to the rule of common sense, some action should follow this assertion.

So if he intends to do as he says, he will at the conclusion of these words immerse the applicant. But how? some one might ask. Remembering the kneeling posture of the body, there is only one manner by which the immersion could be performed, and that is by bowing the head forward. It would be almost impossible to do it backwards while in this position. But immersion by bowing the head forward is not only a matter of expediency because of the posture of the body, but we find also that there is a possibility of this being the apostolic mode. Many good people lay great stress on a forward action in baptism, as if it would be actually wrong to be immersed backwards. We could not feel justified in making such an assertion, as it is impossible to find any direct proof for such in the Gospel. But we find, in the writings of Paul, an actual hint as to the bowing of the head in baptism. The hint, while it may not be ranked amongst the direct and definite teachings of the Gospel, is yet of that peculiar nature that places it a little beyond supposition or speculation. Paul, in Romans 6: 4, 5, says, "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together *in the likeness of his death*, we shall be also in the likeness

of his resurrection." This is no mere coincidence, but a deliberate assertion, made for the purpose of drawing attention to a well-known fact. There is very little doubt but that the mode of baptism is here referred to. The passage is written in such a matter-of-fact way, that as it is not qualified or explained at length, we are led to conclude that there was no question about the mode. The argument is, that as we are baptized into death, even "in the likeness of his death," then we are expected to come forth unto the new life, "in the likeness of his resurrection." The object here was merely to draw a conclusion from the similitude. Then in referring to the Lord's death, we find it thus recorded in John 19: 30: "When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost." So if we must take this in its literality, it places the bowing of the head of the candidate beyond all question. The many arguments used by zealous advocates of a forward action, in direct antagonism to the backward, so far as positive evidence is concerned should be confined to what we have just produced. All other arguments are merely appeals to sentiment and expediency.

*And in the Son's name.* Now having immersed the applicant "in the name of the Father," what shall be done next? The candidate is still on his

knees, and, although a complete immersion has taken place, the baptism is far from being complete. Only one Person of the Trinity has been mentioned, two more remain. If the same rule is carried out, there are two complete immersions yet to be observed. The next words in the commission are "and of the Son." It is not necessary to bring forward an array of grammatical proof to show that the commission, as a sentence, is not complete, so as to give it its full force; in other words, that there are words omitted or understood that are necessary to give it its proper meaning. This omission is what grammarians call an "ellipsis."

At this stage of the investigation, we will merely appeal to the common sense of the reader. Our commission reads, "Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." The words *πατρός, υἱοῦ, ἁγίου πνεύματος*, translated "Father," "Son," and "Holy Spirit," are in the genitive case. The genitive case necessitates the preposition "of" before each word. The genitive case is equivalent to the possessive in English. Using the possessive case, we then would have, "Baptizing them in the Father's name, and the son's, and the Holy Ghost's." To get at the meaning we have only to ask, "The Son's what?" The question naturally answers itself, "The Son's name." Then what is to be done in the Son's

name? The answer is equally plain, "Baptizing them in the Son's name." The conjunction "and" has a peculiar force here. It not only connects, but makes each clause similar and of equal force. To put the expression in full, and give it its proper meaning by filling up the ellipsis, the commission would read thus, "Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and baptizing them in the name of the Son, and baptizing them in the name of the Holy Ghost." We do not want to question the sincerity of those who practice immersion by a single action, neither, indeed, will we condemn their observance in this matter; but let us appeal to the law and testimony. Then in all candor, how could the commission be carried out without a separate and distinct action in each of the names? With the ellipsis filled out, our revised formula would be first, "I baptize thee in the name of the Father," and, after suiting the action to the words, would follow the next clause, "And I baptize thee in the name of the Son," which would, according to all rule, necessitate another action. So, again, would the immersion be repeated "in the name of the Holy Ghost." Upon the construction of the language of the commission, which we expect to discuss more fully in a future chapter, we then, in the first place, base our practice of Trine Immersion.

## CHAPTER XII.

### THREE IN ONE—ONE IN THREE.

The doctrine of the Trinity beyond human comprehension—"I and my Father are one"—The word "Spirit" and its meaning—The personality and divinity of the Holy Spirit—Three in one, one in three.

*"Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip ? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father."* John 14: 9.

*The doctrine of the Trinity beyond human comprehension.* The doctrine of the Trinity of the Godhead has ever been difficult to comprehend. The church in all ages has ever been divided concerning this. But why should we be surprised because short-sighted man is unable to comprehend the mysteries of eternity? There is little of the spiritual that we can say we fully understand. We are so apt to look at heavenly subjects from a carnal standpoint, and under such circumstances we soon become bewildered. Religion is entirely a matter of faith. But the Lord Jesus Christ has made religion so practical, and taught divine truth so clearly by parable and example that we need not remain long in the dark. But we should not become discouraged because we cannot understand the mysterious unity of the Trinity. We find that the

disciples who followed and lived constantly with Jesus, staggered at this doctrine. But around us, in material that we behold every day of our lives, we find combinations and complications that we are unable to explain or even understand. We only know that they are so by experience. Science only tells us of these combinations, it cannot explain them.

We sow seed in the ground, the germ bursts its tiny shell and springs forth into life. Who can explain the mysterious action of certain properties of the soil upon the seed until it comes forth to life? We cannot explain, we only know it is so. Look at man, he is a trinity within himself—composed of soul, spirit, and body. Three distinct parts, and yet combined they make man. Who can comprehend? Here is a tree, composed of bark, fibre, and sap—another trinity, and who can understand the combination? Even the atmosphere which we take in at every breath, and without which we could not live a moment, even in this we behold a trinity, a trinity of gases; it is composed of oxygen, nitrogen, and carbonic acid. How this combination of separate gases mingles together and forms the atmosphere is beyond our ken. Then there is the water we drink and use every day of our lives, a combination of oxygen and hydrogen. Now because we cannot understand how these gases

mingle together and form air and water, shall we refuse to breathe the one and drink the other? Certainly not. We accept and use them even if we do not understand them. But so many of us act thus in respect to religion. We refuse to accept the doctrines because we are not able to understand them. Thus is it with the Trinity of the Godhead. Revelation tells us of the unity in Trinity, and we are inclined to doubt, and slow to receive, because it is beyond our power of thought.

*"I and my Father are one."* There is a tendency to dispute the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, concerning his claims to be one with the Father. Why, in the face of all the evidence that we have before us, the divinity of Jesus is questioned, may be a mystery to many honest Christians. As there is a question, it will be well enough to look over the evidence. Isaiah, in his prophecies concerning Christ, says in chapter 9: 6, "And his name shall be called the mighty God, the everlasting Father." Then in Matthew 1: 23, we are told that his name was prophesied "Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us." When Philip requested Jesus to show them the Father, his reply was, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father." Paul in his first letter to Timothy (ch 3: 16), referring to Jesus, says, "God was man-

ifest in the flesh." Then in John 10: 30, our Lord himself asserts, "I and my Father are one." The apostles and the early church never doubted the divinity of Christ. The Epistles are full of references to our Savior as God. While man is not able to explain the mystery, yet the fact of Jesus being God is mentioned so often, that we dare not doubt. How far the different Persons of the Godhead are one is where poor man is mystified.

*The word "Spirit" and its meanings.* It is probably more difficult for us to understand the personality of the Holy Spirit than any other subject in the whole Scripture. The difficulty in comprehending is because of the peculiar meaning of the word rendered *spirit*. There is no word in the Greek language that has a wider scope, and a more extended meaning than *πνεῦμα*. The primary sense of the term is *wind*. "The wind [*pneuma*] bloweth where it listeth" (John 3: 8). This is the foundation of the term "spirit." In the New Testament the word has the following meanings: Wind, air in motion, John 3: 8; breath, II. Thes. 2: 8; *the substance* spirit, John 3: 6; a spirit, spiritual being, John 4: 24, Acts 23: 8, 9, Heb. 1: 14; *a bodiless* spirit, spectre, Luke 24: 37; *a foul* spirit (*daimonion*), Matt. 8: 16, Luke 10: 20; spirit, *as a vital principle*, John 6: 63, I. Cor. 15: 45; the *human* spirit, the soul, Matt. 26: 41; 27: 50, Acts 7: 59,

I. Cor. 7: 34; the spirit as the seat of thought and feeling, the mind, Mark 8: 12, Acts 19: 21; spirit, *as a term for a principle superior to a merely natural or carnal course of things*, Rom. 8: 4, Gal. 4: 29; the Holy Spirit, Matt. 3: 16; 12: 31, John 1: 32, 33, et al.; a spiritual influence, an inspiration, Matt. 22: 43, Luke 2: 27, Eph. 1: 17. And so we may go on until we have taken in every shade of meaning connected with the word.

In our common conversation, spirit means activity, life, and energy. But the deeper meaning of the word, when not used in a religious sense, is the peculiar disposition of mind that gives tone to the actions. There is a motive power that lies underneath every action of life. This power influences every word and deed, and makes them good or evil. Two persons may perform the same deeds, and yet the object of these two persons may be radically different. This power that sways unlimited influence over man is spirit. Thus we often say that a man does this or that in a bad or a good spirit. In religion the meaning of the word goes to farther depths. The power that sways the soul and brings forth good and loving actions is the Holy Spirit. The word "holy" is but little understood, although it is accepted in a kind of general way as referring to the divine, and partaking of that nature. This may do, but the word itself is very simple and

has a simple meaning. The Welsh people have struck the true definition. In translating the Holy Spirit, they use the word *Glan*, which simply means *clean*. Holy Spirit means to them "The Clean Spirit." No word in our language could express as much as "*clean*." The more we consider it as an expression of the attributes of the Spirit of God, and of the result of the influence of that Spirit, the more we are inclined to accept it as the definition of "holy."

*The personality and divinity of the Holy Spirit.* Probably the work of the Holy Spirit is narrowed down into too small a compass. People generally consider the work of the Spirit confined immediately to influencing the heart and conduct of believers, which influence in theology we term sanctification. We are too apt to forget that the Spirit pervades the world of nature, animating it with the principle of life. Early in the world's history we are told of his presence and influence. The Spirit of God moved upon or brooded over the face of the waters. (Gen. 1: 2, Job 26: 13.) This doctrine of the Spirit being the all-pervading, animating principle of life in nature, differs very materially from the doctrine of pantheism on the one hand, and from the Platonic soul of the world on the other. The Spirit is working constantly in and through natural laws; this work we call *nature*.

So in the Christian life, the Spirit is constantly working in the soul through the divinely appointed ordinances; this work we call *grace*. The constant working of the Spirit in nature is seldom recognized by man. But the working of the Spirit upon the soul is fully recognized, and the effect is beneficial in the highest degree.

As to the personality of the Holy Spirit we refer to John 14:16, 17: "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever: even the Spirit of truth." Then in John 15:26: "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me." The word "Comforter" includes also the meanings attached to "Advocate" or "Paraclete," and suggests the idea of help, strength, and consolation. This description of the Holy Spirit is full of meaning. The word translated "Comforter" has been rendered *Helper*, *Advocate*, *Intercessor*, etc. But the truth is, no single English word can fully express the original. So we had better cling to the Greek, *Paraclete*. It means, *one called to be beside another*. In Greek and Roman courts of law it was the custom, when a man was called to answer any charge, that he should be accompanied to the bar by one or more of his most influential friends. These were not

advocates in our sense of the term, not professional men paid by a fee, but men who out of friendship came to stand by their friend in his time of need, to help him to clear himself, to encourage him, to suggest to him wise and prevailing pleas, or to speak for him if necessary. These persons were called *paracletes*. This gives us an idea of what Jesus meant when he said, "I will send another Comforter" (*Paraclete*). This puts the personality of the Holy Spirit beyond a doubt.

Then again, in Acts 13: 2, we have another very definite assertion: "As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them." And in Acts 15: 28, we are told, "For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things." Then Paul, in Romans 8: 26, says, "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities," and in the next verse, "And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit." In speaking of the Holy Spirit as a Person, we must not confound it with the general application of the word. It does not necessarily imply that in using Person, that the Spirit must have form and identity similar to man. We apply it to the work and agency of the Spirit as separate from that of the Father and Son.

The divinity of the Spirit, too, is plainly taught in the New Testament. In Acts 5: 3, Peter said, "Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost?" Then in the next verse by way of explanation, he says, "Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God." This gives very plainly what Peter's views on the Holy Spirit were. We see by this passage that the divine name is especially applied to him. Again, in I. Cor. 3: 16, Paul addresses his brethren, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" And in another place, "What, know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost?" The argument of the apostle is nothing, if the Holy Spirit be not God, for it turns on the fact that God dwelt in them, yet there is no way in which he dwelt there but by his Spirit.

Then, too, the works which he is said to perform, prove him to be divine. None but God has power to create, yet he garnished the heavens. None but God can accomplish miracles, yet Christ said, "If I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you." God alone can raise the dead. Yet the apostle speaks of the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead, and that he shall also quicken our mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

Divine worship is ascribed to the Holy Spirit. We are baptized in his name, the solemn benediction so often pronounced, includes, with the love of God, and the grace of Christ, the communion of the Holy Ghost. Here he is regarded as the source of our spiritual blessing, and is invoked in the same breath which acknowledges the divine authority of the Father and of the Son.

*Three in one — one in three.* The Christians of the second, and even of the third century, were satisfied with merely using scriptural expressions concerning the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, without attempting to define their relation to one another. When man attempted to advance theories concerning the relation of the different persons of the Godhead toward each other, then came schisms and dissensions. It is useless to attempt to explain this mysterious unity by anything with which we are acquainted. Many illustrate the unity of the Trinity by appealing to the unity of the members of the family circle. Others claim that the persons of the Trinity are merely one in motive and object. Then, again, others contend that as each person of the Godhead has his peculiar work and office, that they merely represent certain attributes of the one God. But why should we contend or attempt to theorize? We may add one more to the already many theories extant. That there is a mysterious

unity of the Trinity we see everywhere in the sacred writings. We can easily arrive at a conclusion, that for all practical good, will be perfectly satisfactory. Like many other questions, not plainly given in the Scriptures, such as the "Intermediate state of the dead," "The locality of heaven," "The immortal body in eternity," and many more such questions, we are inclined to guess at it, and very often this is done at the expense of truth and common sense. If God considered it necessary that we should know, he would have told us plainly, and placed the matter beyond all controversy. All that is necessary for our temporal and eternal good is plainly told us. Why should we want to know more than God considers necessary to tell us?

The Trinity was foreshadowed in the very dawn of history. "Let us make man in our own image," is the first whispering of this doctrine. Paul throughout his whole writings keeps hinting at it. "For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father," says Paul to the Ephesians. Then we see how the doctrine of the Trinity is implied in the baptismal formula, and the apostolic benedictions. We acknowledge the Father and Son to be distinct, real persons. Then when the Holy Spirit is associated with them on an equality, it is only reasonable to think of him as a person, and not a mere power or influence.

The subject is baptized into the belief of three persons. He is baptized into each name of the Godhead. The word *ὄνομα*, is the appellation of a person. When used as in Acts 1:5, it stands for a person, and not for an influence or power. So we are baptized into the name of three real and distinct beings, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. "These distinctive appellations denote," says Augustine, "the reciprocal relations of the three persons to each other, and not the substance itself, which is but one."

"The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen," is the benediction of Paul to the Corinthians. In this we see the unity and also the recognition of the distinct personality of each. In this the act of communion, fellowship, or participation, implies a divine personal agent as real as does the grace that we receive from Christ, or the love bestowed upon us by the Father.

What a beautiful harmony there is in the unity of the Godhead, as we contemplate the great plan of heaven for the salvation of mankind. As we accept this plan with child-like confidence, and worship the Triune God for his love and mercy; God, the Father, full of compassion; and Jesus, as God manifest in the flesh, bringing the Gospel of

mercy to fallen man, coming to us in his humanity as our “Elder Brother”; and the Holy Spirit, the heaven-sent Paraclete, who is always ready to aid us by his presence and gentle influence. The doctrine of the Trinity is the central sun of the Christian system, the source of light and heat, motion and life, to the worlds of mind within its sphere. Blot it out, and you throw us back on the night of paganism, to the mere religion of nature, the dim twilight of heathen philosophy. We will say then, with Paul, “Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.”

## CHAPTER XIII.

### TWELVE ARGUMENTS FOR TRINE IMMERSION.

The first proof is based on the language of the commission — Trine immersion alone truly represents the Trinity — It represents the three great principles of our revealed religion — The bowing of the head very significant — “The Teachings of the Twelve Apostles” — It is the practice of the Greek Church — The church at Philadelphia — Historical testimony — The meaning of “*Baptizo*” — “One Lord, one faith, one baptism” — Greater faith required — Single action in baptism does not reach to the apostles.

“*Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.*” I. Thes. 5: 21.

In presenting an array of evidence to prove that the preponderance of testimony, concerning the apostolic mode of baptism, in obedience to the Lord’s commission, in Matthew 28: 19, is in favor of trine immersion, we shall not enter into any length to substantiate the evidence now. Whatever is necessary in the way of explanation and substantiation will be done in subsequent chapters.

1. *The first proof is based on the language of the commission.* On the plain interpretation and grammatical construction of the language of the Lord’s commission, we want to plant our feet solidly. Then all other evidence will, according to their strength and power, buttress up this position, until it will become a citadel of truth and reason,

strong enough to resist every assault. Doctor Conant, a very prominent Baptist commentator, and a strong advocate of single immersion, in his notes on Matthew 28: 19, after referring to the ancient practice of immersing at the utterance of each name, admits that it would have been justifiable had the text read, "In the name of the Father, and in the name of the Son, and in the name of the Holy Ghost." This is what we claim the text does read. The words "in the name" being understood before "of the Son," and "of the Holy Ghost." Surely there must be some very definite reason for this peculiar form of expression. If it were intended that but one action should be performed, then the commission would have read, "Baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost." But we have the words "and of the" before "Son" and "Holy Ghost." Both of which demand recognition and distinct action. On this plain law of language we base our authority for the practice of a three-in-one baptism.

2. *Trine immersion alone truly represents the Trinity.* Trine immersion is the only form of baptism that truly represents the unity of the Trinity. The applicant is taken into the water, and is then requested to kneel, as this is the most expressive form of humility that the body can assume. The body, while in this kneeling posture, is, of course,

partially immersed, then the head is immersed three times in the name of each of the Persons of the Godhead. Even the action of bowing the head in baptism is not done without reason. In Romans 6: 4, 5, Paul says, "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death." This burial does not refer to the *mode* of baptism; for as every nation and age has its own mode of burial, so then would they have their mode of baptism to suit. It rather refers to the general principle that burial implies in all ages and countries; namely, a putting out of sight, a submerging, an overwhelming, a placing beneath, which is truly carried out in immersion. This is plainly taught by referring to the remainder of the verse, "That like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." The going down in burial, and raising up again in newness of life, are the principles prominent here. But to go on to verse 5: "For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection." This word "likeness" implies "according to the manner of," and so has something to do in enabling us to get at a particular mode. What was the manner of his death? In John 19: 30, we learn "he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost." Thus we are baptized in the "likeness of his death" by bowing the

head forward in the water. While the head is under the water the body is completely immersed. The bowing of the head is repeated in the name of each Person of the Trinity. The body being partially immersed during the whole ceremony, we have not three separate baptisms, but three baptisms in one. Three baptisms in one, and one baptism in three. This is the principle of the Trinity. Therefore we are trine immersionists because no other form of baptism that could be invented by the mind of man, can so truthfully represent the mysterious unity of the Trinity.

3. *It represents the three great principles of our revealed religion.* The great principles taught us in the Word of God are, *the creation and preservation* of the human family by God the Father; *the redemption* of the human family by Jesus Christ, the Son of God; and *the regeneration and sanctification* of the human family by the Holy Spirit, the gift of the Father and the Son. These principles are prominent over all others, towering far above every other revelation, and are the foundations of all other truths presented for our acceptance. On these three principles swings the door of eternal truth. These distinct teachings are the fundamental truths of heaven's revelation to man, and are thus made very prominent by the Lord in the ordinance of baptism, and we are baptized into each

name separately to signify our acceptance of them. Each of these names represents a positive principle and foundation of our faith; therefore should be strongly emphasized. And how could this be better done than by our threefold action in baptism?

4. *The bowing of the head very significant.* Not only is the bowing of the head in the act of baptism intended to be an indication of the humility of the heart, but also a mark of our respect for the names of the Triune God. This is directly in accordance with the spirit of the Gospel. Speaking of the exaltation of the Savior, and the honor and worship due his name, Paul says (Phil. 2: 9, 10): "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow." Then in Romans 14: 11, Paul, referring to the prophecy of Isaiah, says, "For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God." When would bowing be more appropriate and applicable than *in* the ordinance of baptism, which is the ceremony ordained by the Lord himself as the entrance into the church? Not only is it a sign of our humility, respect, and worship, but by the bowing of the head we emphatically confess our belief in the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. As each name is

uttered we bow the head in adoration and worship, confessing the principles that each name represents. Thus giving it emphasis, and also acknowledging the importance of this confession by distinctly bowing to each name, as the words of Jesus undoubtedly imply.

By no other form of baptism could this be thus carried out. Bowing our acknowledgement, confession, and worship, of each name *during* the observance of this ordinance can only be done by the apostolic mode of a face-forward trine immersion.

5. "*The Teachings of the Twelve Apostles.*" Some few years ago, Philotheos Bryennios, Metropolitan of Nicomedia, discovered an old manuscript in the library of the Monastery of the Most Holy Sepulchre in Constantinople, bearing the title of *Didachai ton dodeka apostolon*, "Teachings of the twelve apostles." The manuscript bears the signature of "Leon, notary and sinner," who completed the transcription in the month of June, A. D. 1056. It is conceded by all the scholars and critics that have examined the manuscript, that the original, of which this is a copy, dates from a period not later than the first half of the second century of the Christian era. The finding of the manuscript created no small stir in the Christian world, and its teaching is considered important testimony in

arriving at the knowledge of the practice of the early church, especially respecting baptism. Here is the testimony:

“And touching baptism, thus baptize: having first declared all these things, baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, in living water. But if thou have not living water, baptize in other water; and if thou canst not in cold, then in warm. But if thou have neither, pour on the head water thrice in the name of Father and Son and Holy Spirit.”

Here is indisputable evidence of a threefold action in baptism.

6. *It is the practice of the Greek Church.* The Greek fathers have ever been quoted as the best authority in deciding the meaning of the Greek text. They are the acknowledged champions who have ever defended the church from heresies, and from the attacks of unbelievers. Dr. Clark, in his Commentary, thus alludes to them: “As they lived nearer to the primitive times of Christianity than we do, we must allow that they were at least as competent as ourselves to pass judgment on any subject of theological discussion; but in the case now before us, their authority must be vastly greater. In addition to the circumstance of the Greek being their native tongue, some of them were men of very extensive learning, and of dis-

tinguished skill in philological research; they must therefore have had a more accurate perception than the most learned among us can pretend to, of the precise application of every rule in syntax, the exact meaning of the minutest particle, and the determinate effect of the slightest inflection in the language." We could never have acknowledged the importance of the authority of the Greek Church in such strong language, without being accused of radicalism and exaggeration; therefore we allow Doctor Clark to be our spokesman. After such a tribute to the learning and authority of the Greek fathers, by one who does not believe, or, at least, does not practice trine immersion, we, surely, should not be blamed for appealing to them on the subject under discussion. The Greek Church has never changed her mode of baptism. She still clings to the apostolic mode of trine immersion. If they are not able to interpret their own language correctly, it is useless for us to assume to know. Therefore, we now present the practice of the Greek Church as a very substantial authority for three actions in baptism.

7. *The church at Philadelphia.* Philadelphia, one of the "seven churches which are in Asia," whom John addresses in his Revelation, is the only one concerning which it was prophesied it should remain unharmed in the midst of the gen-

eral desolation. The prophecy is found in Revelation 3: 10, and reads, "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth." Many travelers have visited this ancient city, and all call general attention to the fulfillment of this prophecy. There is a strong Greek Church there, and the practice of trine immersion has been observed uninterruptedly for over eighteen centuries. One traveler tells us that Ephesus is desolate, and without a Christian temple or altar; Laodicea is without inhabitant, except the foxes and jackals that prowl amid her circus and her theatres; Sardis is represented by one Turkish and one Greek hut; a handful of down-trodden Greek Christians worship in a subterranean chapel at Pergamos; but in the language of Gibbon, "Philadelphia alone has been saved by prophecy or courage. At a distance from the sea, forgotten by the emperor, encompassed on all sides by the Turks, *she* only among the Greek colonies and churches of Asia is still erect—a column in a scene of ruins." This is the testimony of a skeptic.

Dr. J. P. Durbin tells us, "The candlestick has never been removed; the angel of the church has always been there. The altar of Jesus has been often shaken, both by the imperial pagan power,

when Philadelphia supplied eleven martyrs as companions to Polycarp in the flames of Smyrna, and by the arms of the False Prophet, when Bajazet and Tamerlane swept over Asia Minor like an inundation; yet it has never been overthrown. The crumbling walls of twenty ruined churches, and the swelling domes and towering minarets of a dozen mosques attest the hours of fiery temptation; yet three thousand Christian Greeks, and half a dozen churches still kept in repair, and still vocal with praise to Jesus, attest that he has been faithful to his promise." So we point to the uninterrupted practice of the Philadelphia church, and the approbation of heaven upon her in the fulfillment of this old prophecy as an evidence in favor of trine immersion. Though she may have deviated in many points from the apostolic mode of worship, yet as a branch of the Greek Church she has remained faithful in baptism.

8. *Historical testimony.* Beyond doubt the preponderance of evidence by the early and more modern church writers is in favor of trine immersion. From Justin Martyr, who was born about the time of the death of John the apostle, along through the centuries that have intervened, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Monulus, Cyril, Basil, Ambrose, Chrysostom, Augustine, Theodoret, and

a host of other writers testify in favor of trine immersion. These testimonies surely must have their weight in determining the original apostolic mode.

9. *The meaning of "baptizo."* The meaning of βαπτίζω even should have some weight in deciding the matter before us. *Baptizo*, by many grammarians and lexicographers, is classed as a frequentative verb. The Greek grammarians explain that frequentatives express a repetition or increase of the action expressed by the primitive. In this instance, *bapto* is the primitive, and *baptizo* the frequentative. Bullion, Buttman, Rost, and no doubt, others, in their grammars, lay it down as a rule, that a certain class of verbs ending in *zo*, formed from other verbs have the signification of frequentatives. Stephens, Vossius, Passow, Bretschneider, Donnegan, Liddell & Scott, Kouma, Gaza, Rost, and Palm, all render *baptizo* "To dip or immerse repeatedly." Richardson's large English dictionary defines baptize as anglicized in King James' version from *baptizo*, "To dip or merge frequently." This difference between *bapto* and *baptizo* is very plain in the use of these words in the Old and New Testaments. "He dipped [*ebapse*] his finger in the blood" (Lev. 9: 9). "Shall dip [*bapsei*] them and the living bird in the blood of the bird that was killed" (Lev. 14: 6). "Naaman dipped [*ebaptisato*] himself seven times

in Jordan" (II. Kings 5: 14). *Bapto*, and *embapto*, its compound, occur only six times in the New Testament Greek, and never of baptism. Thus: "He that hath dipped [*embapsas*] his hand" (Matt. 26: 23). "Dipping in [*embaptomenos*] with me" (Mark 14: 20). "That he may dip [*bapse*] his finger" (Luke 16: 24). "Shall dip [*bapsas*], and having dipped [*embapsas*] the sop" (John 13: 26). Wherever the ordinance of baptism is referred to, *baptizo* with its cognates and corresponding substantives is employed.

10. "*One Lord, one faith, one baptism.*" This text has been often used as evidence against three actions in baptism; but we will now produce it as testimony in the affirmative. We must bear in mind that Paul was exhorting the Ephesian church to unity. That although there was such a diversity in all things, yet there was a blending together, a oneness plainly to be seen through all the apparent diversity. Especially is this so in spiritual matters. Although God the Father was called Lord, and Jesus Christ was given the same title, yet Paul says there is but "one Lord." The unity of the Trinity is strongly urged here. So we have different faiths—a faith in the divinity of Jesus, a faith in his power to help and forgive, a faith in his resurrection, a faith in the promises of God, yet there is but "one faith." So, also, we are

baptized in the name of the Father, and baptized in the name of the Son, and again in the name of the Holy Spirit, yet there is but "one baptism." The Greek word here is *baptisma*, literally, a dipping, from the frequentative verb *baptizo*. There was danger of breaking off the unity of these spiritual truths, therefore Paul comes forth with his timely warning. It is not "one dip" nor "one immersion" that is mentioned here, but "one dipping." Though apparently three baptisms, yet in truth it is but one.

11. *Greater faith required.* It undoubtedly requires more faith to be baptized by trine immersion than by any other form. It is so much easier to be baptized by other modes, and therefore the easier form of baptism would naturally become the most popular. Faith, like all other virtues, will become strengthened when it is put to use, and its greatest powers brought into active play. In all of the Lord's dealings with those he desired to bless while on earth, he invariably tested their faith. He was always anxious to draw out the faith that slumbered in the heart; this exercise of their confidence only strengthened them. The design of baptism is not merely a symbol of the washing away of the sins, but also an expression of the faith, a complete surrender of our will to God, which is the beginning of the new life in Christ

Jesus. The new life is thus ushered in by a strong expression of faith. If baptism is the outward sign of the condition of faith in the heart, then it does not require much argument to show that the greater the baptism, the greater the faith.

12. *Single action in baptism does not reach to the apostles.* The earliest record we have of single immersion is about the middle of the fourth century. Eunomius was the first advocate of this form. He abandoned the use of the scriptural formula, and baptized into the death of Christ. This occurred about A. D. 350. Theodoret, who lived in the fifth century, thus speaks of the heresies of Eunomius: "He subverted the law of holy baptism, which had been handed down from the beginning from the Lord, and from the apostles, and made a contrary law, asserting that it was not necessary to immerse the candidate for baptism thrice, nor to mention the name of the Trinity, but to immerse once only into the death of Christ."

But the practice of one action in baptism did not receive official sanction until the seventh century. Then, merely to oppose the Spanish Arians, Pope Gregory the Great, consented to its practice thus: "But if any one thinks this is rather done in regard to the Holy Trinity, a single immersion in baptism does in no way prejudice that; for so long as unity of substance is preserved, it is no harm

whether a child be baptized with one immersion or three, because three immersions may represent the trinity of persons, and one immersion the unity of the Godhead."

Thus, according to ecclesiastical history, the introduction of single immersion was gradual, and it took many centuries after the advice of Pope Gregory before it was generally accepted. It is but reasonable to believe that people do not generally go from the easier to the harder modes. The general tendency is always from the greater to the lesser. The changes in baptism did not go from sprinkling to trine immersion; but rather the change came downward from trine immersion to sprinkling, and in many instances from sprinkling, the tendency is to cancel baptism altogether as a useless ceremony.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### HISTORICAL TESTIMONY.

The importance of history — Justin Martyr — Clement — Tertullian — Monulus — Cyril — Basil — Ambrose — Chrysostom — Theodoret — Gelasius — Pelagius — The baptism of Clovis — Theophylact — Bingham — Fourth Council of Toledo — Luther — Carson — Cave — Bishop Beveridge — Vossius — Robinson — John Wesley — The churches that practice trine immersion.

*The importance of history.* The importance of historical testimony on any important subject cannot be overrated. The tendencies and inclinations of people in the course of time so change customs and practices that the original meanings of certain words have been radically changed. History comes to the rescue and brings back the words to us in their original sense. History, indeed, is thus a greater authority than grammars and dictionaries. When we are trying to obtain the true meaning of the word *baptize*, concerning which there are so many conflicting opinions, we appeal to the ancient church to know how they performed baptism. The practice of the early church in baptism is the only true and original interpretation of the word. Whatever practice may have been introduced in later times, even if it

has been generally adopted by the modern church, and the dictionaries give its meaning in accordance with the new and popular idea, this will never decide its true signification. We go back to the birth of the word, and whatever these early fathers considered its interpretation, must be correct. In the words of the prominent debater and Christian scholar, "The history of baptism is the philology of the word." So we will commence as near the apostolic age as history will carry us, and thus show that trine immersion is the scriptural mode of baptism.

*Justin Martyr.* Justin Martyr was born in Samaria in A. D. 100, if not eleven years before; however, it is positively certain that his birth took place as early as the death of the apostle John; he was baptized at the age of thirty-three, A. D. 133, or only thirty-three years after the close of the apostolic age, and died A. D. 165, or about fifteen years after the birth of Clement of Alexandria.

Justin wrote "An Apology for Christians, Addressed to the Emperor, the Senate, and the People of Rome." In this work he describes the doctrines and ordinances of the church of Christ, and on baptism has the following passage:—"Then we bring them to some place where there is water, and they are baptized by the same way of baptism by which we were baptized; for they are

washed in the water in the name of God the Father, Lord of all things: and of our Savior Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit."

The translator of the works of Justin, Mr. Reeves, says, concerning the mode of baptism, "The candidates were *thrice* plunged under the water at the naming of the three Persons in the blessed Trinity."

*Clement.* Clement of Alexandria was born about A. D. 150, and died in the year 220. He was a man of remarkable learning, and a celebrated school teacher in the city of Alexandria. He wrote a number of religious works, but few of which have come down to us.

In addressing himself to the churches planted by the apostles — churches composed of members, many of whom were baptized by the immediate successors of the apostles, he says, "Ye were conducted to a bath just as Christ was carried to the grave, and were thrice immersed to signify the three days of his burial."

*Tertullian.* This remarkable person was born at Carthage, A. D. 160, wrote in the year 204, and died A. D. 220. Tertullian is regarded as the greatest and most learned of all the Latin Fathers, and his testimony in favor of trine immersion is such that none can overthrow it by any fair means. "I shall begin with baptism. When we are going

to enter the water, but a little before in the presence of the congregation and under the hand of the president, we solemnly profess that we disown the Devil, and his pomp and his angels. Hereupon we are thrice immersed, making a somewhat ampler pledge than the Lord has appointed in the Gospel." "Lastly, He commands them to baptize into the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost, not into a unipersonal God. And indeed it is not once only, but three times, that we are immersed into the three Persons, at each several mention of their names."

*Monulus.* Monulus was born only about thirty-four years after the death of Polycarp, and while at the famous Council of Carthage, A. D. 256, he made use of the following language in one of his speeches, preserved by Cyprian: "The true doctrine of our holy mother, the Catholic Church, hath always, my brethern, been with us, and doth yet abide with us, and especially in the Article of Baptism, and the trine immersion wherewith it is celebrated; our Lord having said, 'Go ye, and baptize the Gentiles, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.'"

*Cyril.* Cyril was born at or near Jerusalem, about A. D. 315, wrote in the year 374, and died A. D. 386. At the age of thirty, he was ordained priest by Maximus, Bishop of Jerusalem. "Ye

were led to the pool of divine baptism as Christ was carried from the cross to the sepulchre, and each one of you was asked, whether he believed in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; and ye made that saving confession and descended three times into the water, and ascended again; here also covertly pointing by a figure at the three days' burial of Christ."

*Basil.* Basil was born at Cæsarea, A. D. 328, wrote in the year 360, and died Jan. 1, 379. He inherited a strong feeling of Christianity from his relatives, who had been Christians for many years; his grandfather, who was a Christian, was born only about one hundred and fifty years after the death of the apostle John. So remarkable was Basil's learning and firmness, that he was universally admired even by his enemies. "This, then, is what is meant by being born of water and of the Spirit; death being brought to pass in the water, but life being wrought in us through the Spirit. In three immersions, therefore, and in the same number of invocations, the great mystery of baptism is finished."

*Ambrose.* Ambrose was Bishop of the Church at Milan; he was born A. D. 340, wrote A. D. 374, and died about the year 397. "Thou wast asked, Dost thou believe in God the Father Almighty? Thou saidst, 'I do believe,' and wast dipped, that is,

buried. Thou wast asked again, Dost thou believe on our Lord Jesus Christ and his crucifixion? Thou saidst, 'I believe,' and wast dipped again, and so wast buried with Christ. Thou wast interrogated the third time, Dost thou believe in the Holy Spirit? Thou answeredst, 'I believe,' and wast dipped a third time."

*Chrysostom.* Chrysostom was born in the city of Antioch, of noble and opulent parents, January 14, A. D. 347: and between the eighteenth and twenty-third years of his age was baptized by Meletius, Bishop of Antioch. He was the most profound Greek scholar and devout student of the Bible that ever lived. He studied the Bible with great care, and is said to have been able to repeat the entire work. "Christ delivered to his disciples one baptism in three immersions of the body, when he said to them, 'Go, teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.'"

*Theodoret.* Theodoret, a celebrated church historian and theological writer, was born at Antioch about the year 393, and received his name (which means *God-bestowed*) from the circumstance of his being supposed to have been granted as the fruit of earnest prayer, to his parents, who had long been childless. He was Bishop of Cyrus, a city of Cyriæ, and was prominent for his zeal and

eloquence. "He (Eunomius) subverted the holy law of baptism, which had been handed down from the beginning from the Lord and the apostles, and made a contrary law, asserting that it is not necessary to immerse the candidate for baptism thrice, nor to mention the names of the Trinity, but to immerse once only in the death of Christ."

*Gelasius.* Gelasius succeeded Felix III., in 492, as pope, and confirmed the estrangement between the eastern and western churches by insisting on the removal of the name of Acacius, Bishop of Constantinople, from the diptychs. He was also the first decidedly to assert the supremacy of the papal over the general councils. He was an extensive writer, and, notwithstanding his peculiar ideas of church government, was a deep thinker. "Then let the priest baptize by trine immersion alone, invoking but once the Holy Trinity, and saying thus: 'And I baptize thee in the name of the Father,' and let him immerse once, 'and of the Son,' and let him immerse a second time, 'and of the Holy Ghost,' and let him immerse a third time."

*Pelagius.* He lived and wrote during the sixth century. He was very severe in his denunciation of single immersion. In his day single immersion had many advocates in Spain, where it first appeared, while the general practice elsewhere was

trine immersion, which prevailed till the fifteenth century, when in some localities it gave way to single immersion. Pelagius was born about 250. "There are many who say that they baptize in the name of Christ alone, and by a single immersion. But the Gospel command, which was given by God himself, and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, reminds us that we should administer holy baptism to every one, in the name of the Trinity and by trine immersion; for our Lord said to his disciples, 'Go baptize all nations in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.' "

*The baptism of Clovis.* Robinson, in his history of baptism, was speaking of a font remarkable in ecclesiastical history and belonging to the church of Notre Dame, when he used the following language: "In this font Clovis was dipped three times in water at his baptism. Modern French writers observe with becoming dignity, that their first Christian king had too much spirit to submit to profess a religion before he had examined whether it were true; and that Vedast and Remegius first instructed him in the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, which he afterwards professed to believe, by being thrice dipped at his baptism. More than three thousand Franks were baptized at the same season and in the same manner."

*Theophylact.* He was born in Constantinople. In 1078 he was made Archbishop of Achrida. He was the author of many valuable commentaries. His works were printed in Greek and Latin. "For one immersion (baptism) is spoken of as also one faith, because of the doctrine respecting the initiation being one in all the church; which has been taught to immerse (baptize) with invocation of the Trinity, and to symbolize the Lord's death and resurrection by the *threefold* sinking down and coming up. It will be noticed that the archbishop did not hold, as our modern single immersionists do, that the phrase, 'One Lord, one faith, *one immersion*' (Eph. 4: 5), means a *single* action; but says *truly*, that the *one immersion* is the doctrine respecting the initiation, being one in all the church. The action being 'the *threefold* sinking down and coming up.'"

*Bingham.* In his "Antiquities of the Christian Church," says: "The Arians in Spain, not being of the sect of the Eunomians, continued for many years to baptize with three immersions; but then they abused this ceremony to a perverse end, to patronize their error about the Son and the Holy Ghost's being of a different nature or essence from the Father; for they made the three immersions to denote a difference or degrees of Divinity in the three divine persons; to oppose whose wicked doc-

trine, and that they might not seem to symbolize with them in any practice, that might give encouragement to it, some Catholics began to leave off the trine immersion, as savoring of Arianism, and took up the single immersion in opposition to them."

*The fourth council of Toledo.* This council was held in Spain in 633. "Some learned persons find fault with this council for changing this ancient custom upon so slight a reason as that of Arians using it; which, if it were any reason, would hold as well against a single immersion, because the Eunomians, a baser sort of Arians, were the first inventors of that practice. And therefore the exception made by the Spanish council in the seventh century cannot prejudice the more ancient and general practice, which, as Strabo observed, still prevailed after this council, and, if Vossius says truly, the trine immersion, or what corresponds to it, the trine aspersion, is the general practice of all churches upon the earth at this day."

The reason advanced by the Spanish council for a change in the form of baptism, Bingham would simply intimate, was no reason at all, as the inventors of single immersion were a baser class of people than those from whom the Catholics were trying to separate themselves in practice. Two evils presented themselves, and the Catholics thought to choose the less dangerous, and judged

it far less disagreeable to sanction and receive a human invention in baptism, than to patronize the anathematized doctrine of the Arians. Strabo is mentioned by Bingham as stating that trine immersion still prevailed after this council. Strabo was the proper person to consult to prove this, as he lived about one hundred years after this council, while Vossius, who lived in the sixteenth century, says it still prevailed in his day.

*Luther.* Martin Luther, the great reformer of the sixteenth century, gives directions how to baptize a converted Jewess, thus: "As to the public act of baptism, let her be dressed in a garment, usually worn by females in baths, and be placed in a bathing tub, up to the neck in water; then let the baptist dip her head three times in the water, with the usual words: 'I baptize you in the name of the Father,' etc."

*Carson.* Alexander Carson, in his work on baptism, gives very emphatic and decided testimony in favor of trine immersion, and says: "The three immersions used by the ancients in the performance of the rite, are called *tria baptismata*, *three baptisms*, that is, *three immersions*; for it could not be *three purifications*; it was only one purification. I am well aware that the three immersions may be called also one baptism. My philosophy can account for this. When they are said to be three baptisms,

the word is used in reference to the act of immersion; when they are called one baptism, the word is used in reference to the rite in its appropriate sense. The three immersions are, in the estimation of those who used them, only one rite, which was designated by the name baptism."

*Cave.* Dr. William Cave, in his "Primitive Christianity," thus testifies: "This immersion was performed thrice, the person baptized being three several times put under water—a custom which Basil and Sozomon will have derived from the apostles. It is certain that it was very early in the church, being twice mentioned by Tertullian as the common practice."

*Bishop Beveridge.* He was a learned bishop of the Church of England, and was one of the most scholarly divines that England ever produced. He claimed to have made baptism a particular study, in all the stages of its history, and the result of his extensive researches is that trine immersion is apostolic. "Neither did the church ever esteem that baptism valid which was not administered exactly according to the institution, in the name of all the three Persons; which the primitive Christians were so strict in the observance of, that it was enjoined, that all persons to be baptized should be plunged three times—first, at 'the name of the Father,' and then at 'the name of the Son,' and

lastly at 'the name of the Holy Ghost'; that so every person might be distinctly nominated, and so our Savior's institution exactly observed in the administration of this sacrament." And in another place, he says: "That this was in some way handed down from the apostles, we dare not deny."

*Vossius.* John Gerard Vossius was born in 1577, and died in Amsterdam in 1649. The term "all countries," mentioned below, refers to all places where immersion was used at that time, which would include the greater part of christendom. "What son of the church will not willingly hold to that custom which the ancient church practiced all over the world, except Spain, etc.? Besides, at the present, trine immersion is used in all countries; so that the custom cannot be changed without an affectation of novelty and scandal given to the weak."

*Robinson.* In his History of Baptism, Robinson says: "It is not true that dipping was exchanged for sprinkling by choice before the Reformation (A. D. 1517); for, till after that period, the ordinary baptism was trine immersion."

*John Wesley.* The following assertion from Moore's Life of Wesley may be somewhat questioned by many who have never closely examined the work. Still this fact is not so wonderful when it should be borne in mind that one hundred years

before the time of Wesley, trine immersion was the general practice, wherever and whenever immersion was used. It will also appear very reasonable when we remember that John Wesley derived his religious ideas from the Church of England. Then trine immersion was the general practice of that church. Mr. Moore says in Vol. I., page 425: "When Mr. Wesley baptized adults, professing faith in Christ, he chose to do it by trine immersion, if the person would submit to it, judging this to be the apostolic method of baptizing."

*The churches that practice trine immersion.* So this kind of testimony can be multiplied, so that we could fill a good sized volume. However, we will close our chapter of Historical Testimony by calling attention to the churches which have and do still practice trine immersion.

The Roman Catholic Church practiced trine immersion until about the time of the Reformation. The change from trine immersion to affusion was gradual. Even now they practice the three actions in affusion.

The Greek Church, through all its changes, still strictly adheres to trine immersion.

The Church of England in the first years of her history practiced trine immersion.

The Lutheran Church observes the rite of bap-

tism by pouring water on the applicant three times, in the name of each Person of the Trinity.

The Seventh Day Baptists practice trine immersion.

The River Brethren, a small body of Christians in North America, observe trine immersion.

The Dunkard Brethren are strong advocates of trine immersion.

A congregation of the Church of England in New Jersey, under the leadership of Rev. James Crystal, baptizes by trine immersion.

The Brethren Church, of which the author is a member, is uncompromising in her adherence to this apostolic mode of baptism.

The Reformed Church, a very strong body of Christians, invariably practices three actions in the administration of baptism.

Besides the foregoing are several other small churches which adhere to the trine action in baptism, either by affusion or immersion. This at once silences the objection that but a small minority of the Christian churches practice the threefold action in baptism.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### CONCLUDING CHAPTER ON BAPTISM.

The design of baptism — Putting on Christ — The new birth — The washing of regeneration — Burial and resurrection — Sentences similar in construction to the commission — Baptism always in the singular number — The article in the Greek and English languages — What is meant by “the name”? — “In the name of the Lord Jesus.”

*“For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.” Gal. 3: 27.*

*The design of baptism — Putting on Christ — The new birth.* In this, the concluding chapter of the discussion on trine immersion, we desire to make emphatic that which may have been only hinted at hitherto. The Lord Jesus Christ never imposed any ordinance or ceremony upon his followers without a design. The outward rites of the church are intended to teach us some grand spiritual lessons that are to benefit the soul. Then what is the design of baptism? In the first place, Paul makes a sweeping assertion, as if to silence all quibbling concerning it: “For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.” We are emphatically told by the Lord himself, “Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein.” As little children, meek and confident, we are willing

to bow to the will of God without any question. It is the doctrine of a full and unconditional surrender to his will. It is the Lord's direct will that we should be baptized, and if we come as little children we will bow to his decree. In explaining to those around him who were his brethren, Jesus said, "Whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother." We do not want to be understood as saying that baptism is the whole will of God or even the most important part of it; but it is the very beginning. Baptism, according to the ordinance of God, is the entrance into the new life. It is the new birth. The beginning of a new life of obedience to God. It is the consecration service. "Except a man be born *of water* and of the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Then who will stand up and contradict the Lord in this? If we are truly children of the Lord, we are willing to bow to his will. Thus in the apostle's language we are willing to "put on Christ."

*The washing of regeneration.* This is not all, either. Is it not also explained to us in unmistakable language as a symbol of the washing away of the sins? Paul, in the relation of his conversion, says that Ananias came to him saying, "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the

Lord." If baptism is a symbol of the cleansing of the sins, and it undoubtedly is, do we not want it done thoroughly? Who wants his sins only partially washed away? That this is the meaning of the rite, we are told plainly in Titus 3: 5: "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost" (*διὰ λουτροῦ πάσης γενέσεως*, literally, *through the washing* [or the bath] *of the new birth*). This is the very same sentiment as spoken by our Lord to Nicodemus, and referred to above, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit." The renewing of the Spirit and the washing of regeneration are the signs of the new life.

*Burial and resurrection.* Paul makes baptism prominent as a symbol of burial and resurrection. "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6: 4). Then in Colossians 2: 12, "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead." The idea made prominent here is that the old life, the old nature is buried in baptism, and then we come forth, after the likeness of the Lord's resurrection, to walk in a new life.

What a beautiful and eloquent picture of the new birth! Here is a real burial and resurrection—a burial of the old life, and a resurrection to a new one. A glorious, real, spiritual illustration, not merely a mind picture to think about and to exercise the imagination, but a living, real representation of the salvation of the man—a burial of the old sins, and a rising up out of selfishness and carnality into a brighter, higher life. As already intimated, burial here does not refer to a particular form to be followed in the act of baptism, but gives us the *principle* which baptism is to represent.

*Sentences similar in construction to the commission.*

It may be possible that we will be better able to get at the true meaning of the language of Matthew 28:19, by comparing it with sentences similar in construction. In Luke 23:38, we have, "And a superscription also was written over him, in letters of Greek, and Latin, and Hebrew." This probably is one of the plainest that can be produced to illustrate a threefold action. Here, too, we have an ellipsis. The verb "written" is understood before "Latin" and "Hebrew." We know that there were three writings, one in each of the languages mentioned. Then, again, in Luke 21:12, we read, "But before all these, they shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues, and into prisons." To fill up this

ellipsis the latter part would read, "*and delivering you up* into prisons." There must be two "deliverings" meant, for a synagogue and a prison are not the same place. But why need we multiply such sentences when our language is full of them? Still we will produce one more. "I wrote my name in the book of the father, and of the mother, and of the son." This sentence, according to every day usage, would be, "I wrote my name in the father's book, and the mother's, and the son's." This, according to our common sense way of understanding language, would imply three books and three writings. Then why can we not use the same law of common sense in interpreting the Lord's commission, which is exactly like it? What would naturally be understood in the one, ought to be naturally understood in the other.

*Baptism always in the singular number.* So many object to trine immersion because the word baptism is always in the singular number. But this is not always the case, for in Hebrews 6: 2, we read "of the doctrine of baptisms." We might lay some stress on this and refer to it as evidence in favor of trine immersion. However, let it be admitted that in the great majority of instances the noun is used in the singular. But why should we think strange of this? In other instances, so common in the Scriptures, words are used in the singular number

that invariably have a plural signification. Take, for instance, the expression "the church of Christ," is it not composed of the churches of Christ? Then we say the "Word of God," does not this mean the words of God? Also the Bible (Book) is composed of books. We speak of God's work, do we not mean God's works? In these instances we see no difficulty in meeting with a word in the singular number meaning a plurality. And yet when we come to baptism and endeavor to reason in the same strain concerning it, all avenues to the understanding seem to be barred and closed. Is not this strange?

*The article in the Greek and English languages.* The article in both languages has more power and is of more importance than we generally are willing to ascribe to it. At least this is so in reference to the Lord's commission. It is recognized as an invariable rule in the Greek, that "when two or more nouns of the same gender, number, and case, connected by the conjunction *καί*, denote the same person or thing, the article is prefixed to the first only, as "*κατανοήσατε τὸν ἀπόστολον καὶ ἀρχιερέα τῆς ἐκκλησίας*," Consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession" (Heb. 3: 1). Also the same thing occurs in Rev. 1: 6, 9, Heb. 12: 2, I. Thess. 1: 3, and many other places. But when different things or persons are denoted, the article is prefixed to each

noun (unless omitted before all, or prefixed to the last only). In the commission the article is prominent before "Father," and "Son," and "Holy Ghost." Thus according to the principle and spirit of the Greek language, these nouns are intended to represent the different persons of the Godhead. The construction of the language makes it so, and thus they are recognized in trine immersion.

Even in the English language we cannot help but recognize the importance of the article in arriving at a proper meaning. In the commission we see how definite and emphatic the article makes the language. "Baptizing them in the name of *the* Father, and of *the* Son, and of *the* Holy Ghost."

*What is meant by "the name"?* We find the Old and New Testaments full of such expressions as "the name of the Lord," "the name of Jehovah," etc. It is the general understanding that when the name of any thing or person is mentioned, the thing or person itself is meant. From the hundreds of repetitions of the expression found in Holy Writ, it, no doubt, was an idiom of the East, giving it an emphasis that we are hardly able to grasp in its fullness. When we are exhorted to "praise his name," we are expected to praise the Lord in reality, and not as our language would imply, to praise the name irrespective of the person. "Believe on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ,"

undoubtedly meant to believe on the Lord Jesus. So when we are to be baptized in the name of the Father, it is meant we are to be baptized into the Father. "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ," has a significance. We are to live with Christ in our hearts. His Spirit is to control us, we are governed by his will, and our hearts are full of that love that he so beautifully displayed on earth. This is what is meant when we put on Christ. Then, again, the passage, "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit," implies that the Holy Spirit is around and within us, that we are living, walking, working in an atmosphere of holiness. Thus, then, when we are baptized into the Father, and into the Son, and into the Holy Spirit, we recognize the great principles represented by the Triune God. The remembrance of the Father's continued protection and providence, and the unbounded love and compassion of the ever-living Redeemer and his gracious promises, with the present influence of the Holy Spirit hovering within and around us, are the benefits and blessings that always fill the believer's heart with joy, when baptized truly and faithfully "in the name of the Father, and in the name of the Son, and in the name of the Holy Ghost."

*"In the name of the Lord Jesus."* "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ." This verse is often quoted as an authority for one action in baptism. As Jesus Christ, God manifest in the flesh, came to bring salvation, and instituted the ordinance of baptism, this expression is considered authority for one action, and that in the name of Jesus, even if the words of the commission are repeated in full. So many of us fail to see the difference of meaning in the two expressions, when we are commanded to be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, and when he commanded his disciples to go forth to baptize "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." The latter expression we have already explained in the preceding paragraph. The present expression, "in the name of the Lord Jesus," is not difficult to comprehend when we look at the parallel texts. Peter said to the lame man, "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk." In Acts 4: 7, we find the high-priest and his satellites asking Peter, "By what power, or by what name, have ye done this?" Then on another occasion, before Agrippa, Paul confessed that at one time he thought he "ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth." It does not require much intelligence or wisdom, from these

quotations, to see that the expression is synonymous with "in or by the authority of Jesus Christ." This expression is still in force. When we say "in the name of the law," we mean "by the authority of the law." Thus, then, the expression, "In the name of the Lord Jesus," meant that they were to be baptized in accordance with the *authority* of the Lord Jesus, which was according to the commission, and by trine immersion.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### THE AGAPE.

The name—A religious feast not new to the Jews—Agape—Manner of observance—Tertullian—Justin—Pliny—Augustine—Lucien—Irregularities cause suspension—The action of church councils.

*“That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread.”* I. Cor. 11: 23.

*The name.* The Lord's Supper had its birth with Christianity. Once only do we find the expression in the New Testament—in I. Corinthians 11: 20, where Paul was condemning the abuses in that church, “When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper.” The religious feast held in connection with the communion by the early church, was conjointly denominated *deipnon kuriakon* (the Lord's Supper) and *agape* (ἀγάπη, love). Mosheim, Neander, and other eminent writers, tell us that they were signified by the phrase *klontes arton*, “the breaking of bread,” and referred to several times in the Acts. We find the term *agapai* used in Jude 1: 12,—“These are spots in your feasts of charity.”

*A religious feast not new to the Jews.* When John the Baptist and the Lord Jesus Christ came preaching the doctrine of baptism, the Jews were already acquainted with immersion as a religious rite, for

priests and proselytes were always immersed under the old dispensation, so the institution of a feast as a religious rite was already familiar to them. The first disciples of the Lord were Jews, and so had been schooled to the use of feasts in the temple services. Jesus, in instituting the ordinances and rites of that more spiritual organization that would eventually capture the whole earth in its embrace, did not introduce anything strange. He took from the common material around him, those things that were practiced and used every day, and consecrated them to a higher and spiritual use. We shall call attention to this fact as we discuss the other ordinances of the Lord.

*Agape.* *Agapai* were love-feasts or feasts of charity, usually celebrated by the early Christians in connection with the Eucharist. At these feasts the rich Christians presented their poorer brethren in the faith with gifts, and all ate together in token of their equality before God and their brotherly harmony. Much learned research has been spent in tracing the history of this custom. Although considerable obscurity may rest on the details, the general historical connection is tolerably plain. With the least reflection, we are struck with the strong attachment and interest that the disciples felt to the sacred memory of that feast in the upper chamber at Jerusalem. Not one single circum-

stance that occurred that night, but it was firmly imbedded in the secret recesses of the heart. They loved to think about that endearing hour. Sad though the memory may have been, as it brought to their remembrance the greatest tragedy the world had ever seen, yet they hugged it to their bosoms as the last reminiscence of him whom they had so faithfully followed, and loved as their own lives. The impression that this last night of Jesus made upon his original followers can be realized by the touching reference of Paul, in I. Corinthians 11:23: "That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread," etc. It seems that this event, to the early disciples, was the pivot upon which the whole fabric of Christianity turned. They talked and wrote and preached and sang about it, until it was, to them, the greatest theme. No wonder then that they perpetuated it, and that it became the foundation of the principal ceremony practiced by the early church. It is so natural for us to conceive how anxious the bosom friends of the Lord would be to commemorate his death—and that by a religious feast. Then this feast, in its character and principle, was in accordance with the genius of the new dispensation—a dispensation of love. Jesus came as a messenger of love; his whole ministry was a ministry of sacrifice, the result of love;

his whole theme was love; compassion and love were written in every miracle; love within and around, love everywhere, until his whole life, and ministry, and death, and resurrection, and ascension, and promises, can be summed up in one word—love. Love is the atmosphere of the church. Love is the great consummation, and eventually the church will be swallowed up in love. Then it is no wonder that the love-feast should take a very prominent part in the polity of the church. It was the link that was intended to bind the different dispositions, temperaments, and social distinctions of her adherents together. In these love-feasts there were no rich, no poor, no ignorant, no intellectual, but all were one—one in impulse, one in object, one in a family that acknowledged Jehovah as their Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ as their Elder Brother. This was the purpose and character of the *agape*.

*Manner of observance.* The festivals observed by the apostolic church seemed to be, and probably were, the same with those of the Jews, but undoubtedly a higher and more spiritual meaning was attached to the celebration of the Christian feasts. The *agape*, as observed, was particularly commemorative of the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus. This was not an annual feast, by any means, but was kept every “first day of the

week," in memory of the same event, and by this continual weekly observance that day soon acquired the name of "Lord's Day," which it has since retained. The Jewish Christians first met in some prominent place in Jerusalem, often in the courts of the temple, because of the old associations, and, no doubt, to hear the teachings of John and Peter. In the course of time they adjourned to the houses of the richer brethren, who willingly opened their doors and hearts, that they might be free from the many persecutions that the Jews inflicted upon them. Often they would go to some upper chamber, and there with closed doors, "for fear of the Jews," would participate in their feast of love. However, great care had to be taken lest these feasts would be rather for the worse than the better. Irregularities and confusion seemed to have entered into their meeting, and it was to correct these that Paul speaks so chidingly to the Corinthian church, and later Jude condemns these "spots" in their "feasts of charity." The ancient ecclesiastical writers used several synonyms for the *agape*. *Sumposia* is used by Chrysostom, Zonaras, and others, while Œcumenius used *deipna koina*.

*Tertullian.* Tertullian, in his account of the *agape*, says, "The nature of our *Cœna* may be gathered from its name, which is the Greek term for love (*dilectio*). However much it may cost us,

it is real gain to incur such expense in the cause of piety; for we aid the poor by this refreshment; we do not sit down to it till we have first tasted of prayer to God; we eat to satisfy our hunger; we drink no more than befits the temperate; we feast as those who recollect that they are to spend the night in devotion; we converse as those who know that the Lord is an ear-witness. After water for washing hands, and lights have been brought in, every one is required to sing something to the praise of God, either from the Scriptures, or from his own thoughts; by this means, if any one has indulged in excess, he is detected. The feast is closed with prayer."

*Justin.* Justin tells us that contributions or oblations of provisions and money were made on these occasions, and the surplus was placed in the hands of the presiding elder, such an one as referred to in I. Timothy 5: 17, by whom it was applied to the relief of orphans and widows, the sick and destitute, prisoners and strangers.

*Pliny—Augustine.* The communion was invariably taken at the close of the love-feast. Thus Pliny, in his celebrated *Epistle* to the Emperor Trajan, after describing the meeting of the Christians for worship, represents them as assembling at a later hour, "*ad capiendum cibum, promiscuum tamen et innoxium.*" By the phrase "*cibum promis-*

*cum*," Augustine remarks, we are not to understand merely food partaken in common with others, but common food, such as is usually eaten; the term "*innoxium*" also intimates that it was perfectly wholesome and lawful, not consisting, for example, of human flesh (for among other odious imputations, that of cannibalism had been cast upon the Christians, which, to prejudiced minds, might derive some apparent support from a misinterpretation of our Lord's language in John 6: 53, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you"), nor of herbs prepared with incantations and magical rites.

*Lucien.* Lucien, also, in his account of the philosopher Peregrinus, tells us that when imprisoned on the charge of being a Christian, he was visited by his brethren in the faith, who brought with them *deipna poikila*, which is generally understood to mean the provisions which were reserved for the absent members of the church at the celebration of the Lord's Supper.

*Irregularities cause suspension.* From the epistle of Jude, and the very doubtful expression found in II. Peter 2: 13, and the language of Paul in I. Corinthians 11: 23, it appears that irregularities had become common in the observance of the *agape*. The feast was wrested from its original design. The richer brethren became selfish and gluttonous

to the great neglect of the poorer members. The wealthier ones partook of their provisions without even inviting the poorer class to partake with them. This, no doubt, was a return to the selfish indulgence that had characterized the prevailing heathen customs, from which some of them had been converted. On account of these irregularities, and, also, it may have been to avoid the persecutions to which the Christians were subject, the feast part of the rite was dropped about the middle of the second century, and the Eucharist was celebrated by itself, and that just before daybreak. We learn from Pliny's *Epistle* that the *agape* was suspected by the Roman authorities of belonging to the class of *Hetairiai*, which were unions or secret societies, often employed for political purposes, and as such were denounced by the imperial edicts.

*The actions of church councils.* The *agape* did not escape the notice of the church councils, for at a later period they were regulated very strictly. For example, according to the 28th canon of the Council of Laodicea, it was forbidden to hold them in churches. At the Council of Carthage, A. D. 379, the 29th canon ordered that none should partake of the Eucharist unless they had previously abstained from food. This exception was then added, "*Excepto uno die anniversario, quo cæna domini celebratur.*" This exception favors the supposition that

the *agapai* were originally held in close imitation of the Last Supper, that is, before instead of after the Eucharist. It was also forbidden in the Council of Orleans, A. D. 533, in the 12th canon. The prohibition was again repeated in the Trullanian Council at Constantinople, A. D. 692; also it was again forbidden in the Council Aix-la-Chapelle, A. D. 816. Yet these regulations were not intended to set aside the *agapai* altogether. In the Council of Gangra in Paphlagonia, about A. D. 630, a curse was denounced (*ἀνάθεμα ἔστω*) on whoever despised the partakers of the *agapai* or refused to join in them. Even Gregory the Great advised the celebration of the *agape* among the Anglo-Saxons, when Christianity was introduced among them by Austin, A. D. 596. He advised that it be observed in booths formed by the branches of trees.

Still the actions of a church council does not make a practice right or wrong. If any ordinance lacked divine sanction, the authority of a church council would never make it divine; and again, on the other hand, if a practice of the church is buttressed up by the plain command and example of the Lord, not all the decisions or vetoes of every church council that ever convened can make it of none effect. So we see that the opinions of church councils have little effect in making or unmaking an ordinance of the church. The question of im-

portance before us is to decide whether the church has the authority of the Lord for the practice and observance of the *agape*, and whether the church is benefited by the practice. For a practice to be truly an *ordinance* in the strict sense of the word, it must be stamped with the Lord's direct command and example. But in the absence of a direct "thus saith the Lord," the church would undoubtedly be justified, according to the law of common sense and personal liberty, in observing a ceremony which would develop some virtue, and keep alive in the soul those sentiments that will make the man better and happier. Such practice could, at least, only be a "custom" and not an "ordinance" of the church. The adoption of such a practice therefore must depend largely on the design and object.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### THE "SUPPER" NOT THE PASSOVER.

Why a difference of opinion?—Why it was thought to be the Passover—What John says—The Passover Feast—Are there any contradictions between the several accounts?—"They made ready the passover"—The intense desire of Jesus.

*"With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer."* Luke 22: 15.

*Why a difference of opinion?* The meal eaten by Jesus with his disciples in the upper chamber at Jerusalem, on the night of his betrayal, is considered by many to have been the Jewish Passover. Many works have already been written for and against this theory, and many great and prominent names are to be found on either side of the question. Why there is this difference of opinion on a subject that both sides claim is so perfectly clear, is one of the mysteries that seem to be almost beyond explanation. It probably may be that by a superficial reading of the Gospels, an opinion is formed, which becomes in time the foundation of an impregnable theory, that no argument can overthrow. That great and prominent theologians can be mistaken on some very simple questions is not an impossibility. Some questions are not considered of sufficient importance to justify a close investigation,

therefore first impressions are considered right, and, once in a while, some passage may apparently strengthen this position, until it becomes a fixed principle; and when this is assailed, evidence to strengthen the first and favorite theory is eagerly sought for. To overcome an original theory is a double task, for before any advance can be made toward a change, the old prejudices have to be removed.

*Why it was thought to be the Passover.* In reading the records of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, concerning the Lord's last visit to Jerusalem, we find in the three Gospels, the question of the disciples, "Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the passover?" The Lord directed them to meet a certain man to whom they were told to say, "The Master saith, I will keep the passover at thy house with my disciples." Then it is asserted, "And they made ready the passover." This undoubtedly would make it appear that they were prepared to partake of the Passover, for both Jesus and his disciples; during this conversation, had direct reference to the Jewish Passover. The surroundings and all things concerned led to this conclusion. Then, to strengthen the position that this was the Passover feast, Luke tells us that when Jesus and his disciples were partaking of the meal, the Lord said, "With desire I have

desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer." This at once clinches the theory, and the mind is made up that it cannot be anything more or less than the Passover feast itself. Then great pains are taken to formulate a time-table of the Lord's last week on earth, so that the Passover shall take place Thursday eve, and the crucifixion on Friday. There may be some other arguments in favor of this idea that are not mentioned here, but these are the principal and most important. Unfortunately, however, this theory conflicts with some very positive assertions to be found elsewhere in the Gospels.

*What John says.* In the first place then, John, in relating this circumstance, tells us positively, "Now *before* the feast of the passover." It may be rather hard for us to realize the exact time indicated here. In chapter 12: 1, we are told, "Jesus six days before the passover came to Bethany." Then in the 12th verse of the same chapter, Jesus went toward Jerusalem, and in the 36th verse, he hid himself from them. When he was about to partake of this supper, it was *before* the Passover. How long it was before we are not told definitely, but from the circumstances related elsewhere, it must have been twenty-four hours before the feast. This undoubtedly was on Thursday evening. Then another circumstance that tells us this was not the

Passover; from the 29th verse of this 13th chapter we infer that the needful things for the feast had not yet been brought. When Jesus had told Judas, "That thou doest, do quickly," not one of the disciples, not even John, understood what the Lord referred to; but they thought that it was a direction to purchase the necessary articles for the feast. Then when we turn to John 18: 28, we are bound to acknowledge that according to him at least, the paschal lamb had not yet been eaten on the following morning. The Jews who had arrested Jesus would not go into the house of the pagan governor, which had not been purified from the leaven, lest they be defiled and could not partake of the feast on the legal day, but would have to defer it one month. (See Num. 9: 6, etc.) Thus, according to John, we are bound to conclude that the meal eaten by Jesus and his disciples on that evening was an ordinary one, and that the Friday on which the Lord was crucified was the 14th of Nisan, the day on which the lamb was to be slain, so that it could be eaten "in the evening." Some of those opposed to this view of the matter really believe that there are but few commentators who thus interpret the Scriptures. Among those who advocate this theory are Lucke, Neander, Krabbe, Meyer, Theile, Sieffert, Usteri, Ideler, Bleek, de Wette, Bruckner, Ebrard, Ewald, Baur, Hilgenfeld,

Hase, Weisse, Ruckert, Steitz, J. Muller, Koessing, Kahnis, Pressense, Keim, and several others. And how are we going to reconcile John with the other evangelists? will be another question. Let us look the subject reasonably in the face, and treat it so that the sole object of our investigation will be to arrive at truth, and not merely to substantiate some preconceived opinion.

*The Passover Feast.* Are we positive we comprehend the time and manner of observing the Passover? Of course, in this land and age of Bibles, it is well known that the Passover was instituted to commemorate the release of the children of Israel from the bondage of Egypt. It was the anniversary of the *passing over* of the Israelites by the angel of death on the night when the first-born of the Egyptians were slain. It was a very important event in the history of God's chosen people. The feast commenced on the 14th of Nisan or Abib and lasted until the 21st inclusive. During this time all leaven was carefully banished from the house. On the 10th of the month Abib, the master of a family separated the sacrifice, which was to be without blemish (Ex. 12: 1-6), and it was slain on the 14th day, *between the two evenings*. At the first observance the Jews ate the Passover with loins girt about, sandals on their feet, staves in their hands, and in haste, like travelers equipped for a

journey (Ex. 12: 11). But subsequently the usual mode of reclining was adopted in token of rest and security. Josephus tells us that, "The feast of unleavened bread succeeds that of the passover, and falls on the fifteenth day of the month, and continues seven days, wherein they feed on unleavened bread." As the 14th was the day on which the leaven was removed from houses, and the lamb slain, and the unleavened bread baked, and other preparations made for the feast, it was called "the day of the preparation," thus it is referred to in Matthew 27: 62, and other places. As this is a very important item in arriving at the proper conclusion, it should not be forgotten. The date of the killing of the lamb was the 14th, but it was not eaten until the evening, which, according to the Jewish mode of counting time, the day beginning at sunset, would make the feast on the 15th. Thus the 14th, on account of the killing, was often called the Passover day (See Lev. 23: 5, and Num. 28: 16), although it was not eaten until the 15th. This is another important item.

*Are there any contradictions between the several accounts?* When we read John 13: 1, 29; 18: 28; 19: 14, 31, we are bound to recognize the certainty with which John announces that the Passover was not eaten until after the crucifixion. John speaks with no uncertain tone, and as one of the inspired

writers we are bound to respect his clear, positive, unequivocal assertions. If there were no other writers but John, all would agree that the supper eaten by the Lord in that upper chamber was *not* the Passover feast. Then if there is a contradiction, either John or the other evangelists were mistaken. This is the exact predicament into which we get, when we assume that the words of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, referred to in the second paragraph of this chapter, mean that the meal eaten on the night of the betrayal was the Jewish Passover, and we question the plain language of John. Many attempts have been made to reconcile what some people innocently claim is a contradiction. One theory is that the Jews had postponed the Passover for a day. So that they would not be bound for two consecutive days to the strictness of the Sabbath observance, they transferred the first feast day, which at that time fell on Friday, to the Sabbath, while Christ faithfully abided by the legal term. This, however, has no history to substantiate it. This theory was born about the time of the Reformation. Then, again, according to Isenberg, "many thousand strangers, in order not to break in upon the Sabbath with the preparation of the Passover meal, held this meal already on the 13th of Nisan. So, also, did Jesus, in order to institute the Lord's Supper as the fulfillment of the

Passover feast, and to die as the Antitype of the Passover lamb." This, too, is unsupported by history. A paschal lamb on the 13th of Nisan is to the Jewish consciousness an impossibility. But why all these theories? Why not take John at his word, and accept his assertions as facts? To endeavor to explain them away will only mystify and land us in confusion, and break up the beautiful harmony and design of the Scriptures.

*"They made ready the passover."* The paschal lamb was to be slain on the 14th, and eaten on the 15th; therefore the meal eaten by Jesus and his disciples on the evening of the 13th or beginning of the 14th was not the Passover feast, but what Luke and John call it, merely a *supper*. Let us look over the assertions of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and see whether there is truly a contradiction. The five references of John to the future Passover feast, while relating the circumstances of our Lord's betrayal and crucifixion, must be recognized as truth, and form the foundation for the correct theory. Matthew says, "Now the first day of the feast of unleavened bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the passover?" Mark and Luke are a little more definite, for they say, "Then came the day of unleavened bread, when the passover must be killed," or "when they killed

the passover." Here, then, is the foundation of the theory that Jesus ate the passover on his last night on earth. We must bear in mind that the paschal lamb was to be slain on the 14th day of the month. We do not want to enter into any detailed criticism of the words in the original Greek, as the translation before us will answer all purposes in bringing out the principle. According to Exodus 12:6, the passover was slain on the 14th. It was on the 14th, then, that the disciples said, "Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the passover?" We must remember that the Jewish day was not like ours, from midnight to midnight. The Jewish day commenced at sunset. So here, now, in the beginning of the 14th, on what would be with us Thursday evening, but with them the commencement of Friday, the 14th, they became anxious about the Passover. Was it not natural? They were honest and pious Jews. Obedience to the law was the first consideration. They came to Jerusalem to keep the feast. The day of preparation, when the passover was to be killed, had commenced, so they desired to know where the preparation should be made. Jesus gave them the necessary information, and they went and "made ready the passover." Now we do not want to quibble about words, but so far as killing the lamb, that would have been impossible. In fact, the time

of the killing is very carefully mentioned; Exodus 12: 6, tells us it was "between the two evenings." That time had not arrived. So we infer the words, "they made ready the passover," implied that all necessary arrangements for the time had been made. They had searched for the leaven and prepared for the reception of the Master, that was all that could be expected then. It may be possible that these words may also mean that they had procured the passover—that they had purchased the lamb and were now ready as soon as the time came. The disciples as pious Jews, under the instruction of the Greatest Jew that ever lived, knew all the details concerning the Passover. Thus, then, we find the disciples on Thursday evening, after sunset, but according to Jewish time, the beginning of the 14th of Nisan, preparing for the Passover.

*The intense desire of Jesus.* The Master and the twelve now surrounded the table prepared for them, and when we remember that they came to the metropolis to observe the Passover, is it any wonder that this should be the topic of conversation? Jesus is speaking. Luke says, "And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer." Yes, "*this* passover," say a great many, at once clinches the theory, and silences all contradiction. The word

“this” tells us that the meal before them was the Passover, and the Lord said so. But before hastily forming a conclusion, remember the positive assertions of John, and let us reason whether these words cannot have another meaning that will not conflict with John. We have said that the Passover was uppermost in the minds of the disciples. The Lord knew that his hour was come. Although he had repeatedly hinted to his disciples about his crucifixion, yet they had failed to receive it. They were anticipating the feast. As true Jews they were looking forward with pleasure to the enjoyment of the feast with their beloved Master. So now he attempts again to prepare their minds for what was to come. “With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer.” This was a Hebraism expressing his intense desire. “This passover,” the one that is only distant twenty-four hours. “This passover,” which we came here to keep. “This passover,” which you are making preparations for. How could the feast which they expected soon to celebrate, be anything else but “this passover” to them. Is not this a common way of expressing a near and expected event? And under the circumstances how could the words mean anything else? In a few hours the Savior will be in the hands of his persecutors, and farther on in the day he will be brought before

Pilate; his enemies will not take him into the pagan hall of judgment, for fear of being defiled so that they could not keep the "this passover." Now at the table of his last supper, he refers to this feast, that the Jews later in the day were afraid they could not celebrate if they went into the house of the heathen governor, as "this passover." This explanation harmonizes with all the circumstances. Then hear the conclusion of the Lord's wish, "For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God." Ah, no more passovers, no more types, the next feast will be the grand Antitype in eternity, the feast of infinite love in heaven. How beautifully the human side of Jesus is here portrayed! He anxiously desired to enjoy another feast with those that had followed him through all his persecutions; but alas! the dark hour of his terrible trial was at hand. "I will not any more eat thereof (not hereof) until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God." Out of the same heart, a few hours later, there came another wish. Hark ye, ye sons of men, while the Man of Sorrows speaks out of his anguished soul, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt."

Other passages might be mentioned, but why is it so necessary to prove a fact? Matthew, in chap-

ter 27: 62, brings another proof that the Passover was not eaten at the time of the crucifixion, "Now the next day, that followed the day of preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate." This was after the crucifixion. The Lord was crucified on "the day of preparation." As before stated, the day of preparation was the day upon which the lamb was killed, and which, of course, was *before* the feast. Thus Matthew becomes a witness against the theory that the Lord ate the Jewish Passover on the night of the betrayal. There is a deep significance in the time of the Lord's crucifixion, which, however, we will reserve for the next chapter.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### THE DESIGN OF THE PASSOVER.

The Jewish religion a religion of types—Sacrifices—The true Paschal Lamb—The time of sacrifice—Jesus crucified on the day of preparation—Paul's testimony.

*"Christ our passover is sacrificed for us."* I. Cor. 5: 7.

*The Jewish religion a religion of types.* In all the ceremonies and institutions of the old dispensation the Lord had a definite design. These rites and feasts were intended to teach deep spiritual truths. They were types and shadows of better things that were to come. It might be shown, and that with great profit, that the Lord's dealings with the children of Israel, were significant beyond mere historical facts; they were intended to teach us God's manner of dealing with man in his eternal salvation. The law truly was a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ. The experiences of the children of Israel are truly typical of the religious and spiritual experience of every child of God. Egypt with her Pharaoh and brick-fields and bondage, truly represents the carnal, selfish world and its tyrant master with the bondage of sin. The rescue of God's chosen people under the leadership of Moses; the march through the wilderness, and the

significant incidents that were there experienced; the crossing of the Jordan and the entrance into Canaan, are all full of spiritual lessons, and truly typical of the struggling, higher life through which a Christian passes. The religion of the Jews may truly be considered a religion of types, that have their fulfillment in the spiritual life. The Pass-over as well as being commemorative was typical. While it was intended to keep before the minds of the Jews their deliverance from bondage, and thus keep them true to the God who delivered them, it also pointed forward to a greater event that should take place in the history of mankind. Everything connected with the feast was highly significant, even to the search for, and the abolishing of, leaven from the houses. The object of this chapter is not so much to explain the spiritual import and meaning of the several ceremonies of this feast, as to point to the typical connection with the Lord Jesus Christ.

*Sacrifices.* It is hardly within the sphere of this work to go into a lengthy discussion of the spiritual meaning of the sacrifices of the old law. The sacrifices and offerings under the Jewish dispensation had their teachings, and frequently in the writings of the old prophets, we are pointed to the spiritual meaning. The Lord desires the complete surrender of man to his service—life, soul, and body.

By these frequent sheddings of blood, this was taught. The blood is the life. The offering of the blood or the life of an animal represented the offering of the whole life to the Lord. The offering of our lives upon the altar of purity and honesty is what we are taught. "To do justice and judgment is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice" (Prov. 21 : 3). "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise. \* \* \* Then shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness" (Ps. 51 : 16, 19). "Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? \* \* \* He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" (Micah 6 : 7, 8.) Thus the mind was led to higher lessons by the teachers of old.

*The true Paschal Lamb.* But let us look in particular to that to which the feast and sacrifice of the Passover pointed. It was the anniversary of the *passing over* of the angel of death. Were not the old Israelites taught here the lesson of redemption? There is another passing over yet in the future. God himself will provide the Lamb. The Lamb was slain, and in fulfillment of the old type, the lintels and door-posts of our lives are to be sprinkled with the blood of the Lamb; and wherever

this blood is seen, then will the avenging angel *pass over*, and we shall be saved for eternity. Does not Isaiah, in chapter 53: 7, refer to this Lamb? "He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth." Did not John the Baptist introduce him to the whole world, when he proclaimed, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world." And when this Lamb of God was offered up a living sacrifice, we see how beautifully this type was carried out.

*The time of sacrifice.* But let us go a step farther. We have seen that the perpetuation of the Pass-over feast, not only continually reminded the Jews of the deliverance of their forefathers, but also continually led them to look forward to a fulfillment of the prophecy uttered by Moses: "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken" (Deut. 18: 15). How truthfully this came to pass in the Antitype of the Pass-over! The paschal lamb was slain on the 14th of Nisan, "between the two evenings." (Marginal reading of Ex. 12: 6.) According to the Jewish mode of reckoning time, each day had two evenings. The day commencing at sunset, began in the evening, and, of course, ended in the evening. The days in that time were divided into two sec-

tions—the morning and the evening. Noon was the time of division. Everything after noon was generally called evening. There was a recognized time when the pious Jews had a devotional exercise called the evening sacrifice; this is hinted at in I. Chron. 16:40, and mentioned specifically in Ezra 9:4. This became a regular hour of worship, and we find Peter and John going to the temple at this time, “being the ninth hour.” (Acts 3:1.) This answered to our three o’clock in the afternoon. Now, according to the manner of keeping time in the days of old, one evening began at noon, the natural time of division; and the other evening began at the beginning of the Jewish day, that would be about six in the evening. So thus “between the two evenings” would be what we would call the middle of the afternoon. Mark tells us, “And it was the third hour, and they crucified him” (ch. 15:25).

*Jesus crucified on the day of preparation.* In John 19:14, just before the crucifixion, it is said, “And it was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour.” And after the crucifixion (verse 31), “Because it was the preparation,” they besought that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath day. The Lord was crucified on the ninth hour of the 14th of Nisan, the regular time of the slaying of the paschal lamb. This was

on Friday, and, of course, the Sabbath was drawing on, as it commenced at sunset of that day. Even Matthew, whom those who hold that the Passover was eaten on Thursday evening quote as an authority for their theory, says, "Now the next day, that followed the day of preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate," requesting that he should make the sepulchre safe. We must not forget that the "day of preparation" was the day when the sacrifice was slain. It was the day when Jesus was crucified. Thus, then, we see that the type and the Antitype met on the cross. Dr. Kitto, in his *Cyclopedia of Biblical Literature*, in a note under the word "passover," says: "Thus in the evening of times (Heb. 1: 2; I. Pet. 1: 19, 20), or *last days*, about the same hour of the day when the paschal lamb was offered in the temple, did Christ die on Calvary, so that the substance and the shadow corresponded." (Mark 15: 25-33.)

*Paul's testimony.* No wonder Paul, after calling attention to the practice of purging out the old leaven in the Passover feast (I. Cor. 5: 7), should say with emphasis and joy, "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us." What an array of testimony! all in favor of Jesus being the Lamb of God, and coming forth as the great Antitype; prophesied of by Moses; typified for nearly fifteen centuries by the feast of the Passover; John positively testify-

ing that he was crucified during the hour of the slaying of the paschal lamb; then this buttressed up by Matthew, Mark, and Luke; lastly, Paul coming in with his explanation of the spiritual application of the Passover, and his assertion that Jesus is our Passover. We are thus enabled to see how the old and new dispensations are dove-tailed together. What a glorious whole do the institutions of God make! We are now enabled to see how beautifully God led the minds of men to accept the heavenly truths that are to lift us up to a higher manhood. While the foregoing may not seem to have any direct reference to the Lord's Supper, which we have now under discussion, yet by this we desire to prepare the mind to comprehend the great design of this Christian feast.

## CHAPTER XX.

### EXEGESIS OF I. CORINTHIANS 11: 17-34.

Paul's analysis of the Lord's Supper is of vital importance in arriving at a proper idea of the position it should occupy in the Christian faith and practice. So with this view we will consider it.

Verse 17. "*Now in this that I declare unto you, I praise you not, that ye come together not for the better, but for the worse.*" Paul seems to have in his mind, in the very beginning, the disorder and confusion of which the church was guilty, also the directions he intended to give, and thus opens up the matter very abruptly. The word ἐπαινῶ (I praise) does not have ὑμᾶς (you) connected with it, as in verse 2 of this chapter, so that the original reads, "I praise not." It is not very plain then what he does not praise. The condemnation may be applied in quite a different sense to what the apostle intends it.

18. "*For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it.*" It seems that there was more than one cause of complaint. The first, no doubt, has reference to the one under consideration—the irregularities of the Lord's Supper. The second is

the misapplication of the gifts of the Spirit, which is treated in the next chapter. "I partly believe it," implies that he does not believe all he has heard. A delicate hint that he had a better opinion of them, rather than a questioning of the veracity of those who informed him. The divisions (*σχίσματα*) refer more to a lack of harmony or mixing together after they had met as a congregation, than to any serious difference of opinion.

19. "*For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.*" The word "heresies" (*αἵρέσεις*) does not mean anything more than the divisions of last verse. It does not mean separations through the holding of different views, but the natural divisions that exist in religious bodies through selfishness, self-conceit, and kindred evils. The verse means that these separations or divisions must naturally come, so that the honest and good may be tested and known. Lack of harmony, when good and bad mingled together, was a natural result.

20. "*When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper.*" Considering the selfishness and irregularities mentioned in the following verse, it was impossible for them to call it the Lord's Supper. Coming together into one place or under one roof does not necessarily make a Lord's Supper. Much else is needed be-

sides merely coming together. The Lord's Supper (*κυριακὸν δεῖπνον*) is a meal belonging to the Lord, a feast of the Lord, consecrated to Christ. This is the same as the *ἀγάπαι* of Jude 1:12, a feast at which the Christians ate and drank together what they severally brought with them. During this meal the consecrated emblems were eaten according to the precedent laid down by the Lord at its institution. This is referred to in the previous chapter, verses 16 and 21, and in Acts 2:42, and other places. The Lord's Supper does not mean merely the celebration of the Eucharist, but the whole meal. Under no circumstances does *δεῖπνον* mean anything less than the evening meal. The precise scope of this word is determined by the meal as originally instituted by the Lord, and recorded in John 13, to which it undoubtedly points. The supper is called the Lord's, because he instituted it. It differs from all other meals because it is consecrated to him, and that *during* this meal, and in connection with it, he introduced the emblems of his own body and blood, a feature that brought it within the ordinances of the church. The memories connected with it, and the thoughts the Lord associated with it, made it peculiarly his, and thus it became dear to the hearts of the disciples.

21. "*For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken.*" Instead of waiting for each other, each one used up the provision he had brought irrespective of the needs and feelings of those present. Of course, when the rich acted in the way here described, the poor also had to eat whatever they might have brought with them by themselves; and if they had nothing, they went away empty, hungry, and put to shame (verse 22). Thus it was no longer the Lord's, but their *own supper*. The very design and first principle of the Lord's Supper was violated—that of making the church a common family, and all becoming a unit. Equality, unity, and humility, are the principles the Lord so strongly emphasized. These are taught in the ordinance. When these principles are lacking, then it is no longer the *Lord's Supper*. The practice of this church shows a sign of selfishness and a lack of love. Coming together into one place, and even bringing food and partaking of it, is not to eat the Lord's supper. If it is the feast of the Lord, he must preside. His Spirit must permeate every heart. If we do provide some of the food, it is but as his stewards. He is the host, and we are merely his guests, and so must be governed by his rule and example.

22. "*What! have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise you not.*" If these people merely desired to have a feast of their own, they had their own houses where they could have enjoyed it. But they came together with the avowed purpose of partaking of the Lord's Supper. They violated every principle of the Lord, therefore it is no wonder that Paul says, "What! have ye not houses to eat and to drink in?" For the gratification of mere physical hunger they had their own houses and their own tables. It was in reference to partaking of their *own supper* (verse 21), that Paul says this. "Have ye not houses to eat and to drink in?" must not be applied as to mean there was no eating and drinking at the Lord's Supper. For how could one partake even of the Lord's Supper without eating and drinking? The distinction between the "Lord's Supper" and our "own supper" must be kept in mind. We should not desecrate the Lord's institution by gluttony and selfishness. Did not some of these people despise the church of God, when they considered its members unworthy to eat and drink on a common footing with them? The poor could not but feel themselves slighted and shamed, if they were not thought worthy of having a share in what the

wealthier had provided. The main emphasis in the first clause is on τῆς ἐκκλησίας τοῦ θεοῦ (the church of God); and in the second, upon κατασχύνετε (shame).

23. *“For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread.”*

It is a question here whether Paul received what follows by *tradition* or *revelation*. This we must leave undecided, as it is impossible to prove either view, although all testimony leans to the latter. He is referring to the instructions he must have given them at some former time. Here, now, is the message: “That the Lord Jesus, the same night,” etc. It must be borne in mind that it was his last night, and to the disciples was peculiarly dear, not only because it was his last meal on earth, but because of the grand truths he taught them there, and the future blessing to which it pointed. No doubt his brief explanation of its object was deeply imbedded on their mind. “For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God.” What could be plainer? There was a feast — a spiritual feast that the accepted of God would enjoy with their beloved Master in the evening of time. Now he is gone, brutally snatched away from them by the murderous hands of his cruel enemies. Yet he lived in their memories. Over and over again,

in imagination, they sat with him in that upper chamber, and the echo of his words were the sweetest music to their loving souls. How they hung over the joyful words of promise! "For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God." So when they assembled together around the tables, they remembered his teaching, his sacrifice, his unselfishness, his anxiety on their account, his love, his promises. No other ceremony was dearer to their hearts than this meal; more especially as the Lord connected it with the feast of eternity. What a hard lot was theirs! Persecution, stripes, imprisonment, and death, were at their heels continually. Every duty was attended with danger and sacrifice. It was a cold, chilly, selfish world to them. Now when they gathered together at the Lord's Supper, they could fearlessly unburden their hearts to each other. They were bound together by the strong ties of Christian love — love so strong that even death could not break the links. They were each day walking in the deep, dark shadows of trials and persecutions, but here they were blessed with the sunshine of hope. How they loved to bask in it! The words of promise came to them o'er and o'er again, "Until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God." Every word was a peal of bells, ringing out joy, and hope, and love, and gladness. "*That the*

*Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed."*

They cannot commemorate that event too substantially. Though it was solemn and gloomy to them, now it is the time above all others, on which they love to look back. He "*took bread.*" This naturally implies the presence of a feast. The bread was on the table. They all remembered that Last Supper. This was the principal feature of this evening, and so when seated at that table, he took bread (*ἄρτον*, a cake of bread). All throughout this account of the Lord's Supper, a feast, a meal, is implied and understood. Paul commences by speaking of it, and then the word "supper" leaves us no alternative, besides the reference that the Eucharist was instituted during *the supper*. Mark that the supper is not condemned in any part of this passage, but merely the irregularities and selfishness of its observance.

24. "*And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.*" The different records connect the Last Supper and the Eucharist very substantially together. As we have seen in the last verse, Paul introduces the narrative by referring to the time and circumstance of its institution, "That the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread." Matthew connects them so that they appear to be different

stages of the same institution, "And as they were eating, Jesus took bread," etc. Mark has it, "And as they did eat, Jesus took bread," etc. The circumstances connected with the Lord's last night, and especially the institution of the Lord's Supper, were well known to the early Christians. Therefore it would not have been necessary to again relate it in detail. The simple introduction by Paul, seemed in his eyes, sufficient for the purpose. His object in relating this incident, with the accompanying explanation, was to correct their irregularities, by calling attention to the design of the institution. "*He brake it.*" This represented the violent death that would soon be accomplished in his body. "*Take, eat.*" It was to become part of our body and system, symbolizing the spiritual nourishment and consequent growth that his disciples would realize when he entered into their being, and they fed on him. "*This is my body,*" more literally, *the body of me*. The emphasis must be laid on τὸ σῶμα (the body). "*Which is broken for you.*" The Lord's body was not broken (see John 19: 33), therefore the word κλάμενον (being broken) is omitted in most of the manuscripts, and is considered spurious. The sentence, without this word, would read, "which is for you," or, "in your behalf." The action of breaking the bread was interpretation and explanation enough. "*This do in remembrance*

*of me.*" Here, then, was the object of partaking of the emblem of his body. These words do not occur in Matthew or Mark. Several prominent commentators seem to think that, generally speaking, a preference must be accorded to the narratives of the "supper" by Matthew and Mark (and between those two, again, to that of Mark) over those of Paul and Luke.

25. "*After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.*" There is a very remarkable agreement between the two accounts of the "supper" as given by Paul and Luke. It is not considered likely that Paul depended upon Luke, but rather the reverse. "*After the same manner,*" implies the giving of thanks. "*When he had supped.*" After he had taken supper. This is another instance of how the Eucharist is dove-tailed into the supper, showing us, beyond doubt, the importance of the meal in the minds of the disciples, and how inseparable they were in their hearts and memories. "*This cup is the new testament [covenant] in my blood.*" The wine in the cup was the emblem of his blood. Christ's blood was the means of reconciliation between God and man — the new covenant, a covenant of grace, in which were established on man's side, faith in Christ, and on God's side, for-

givenness. The Lord looks upon the cup as this covenant, because it contains the divinely-instituted emblem of his covenant-sealing blood. "*This do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.*" According to this, it is the will of Jesus, that whenever they assemble on such occasions, the great design must not be forgotten.

26. "*For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.*" These are still not the words of Christ, but seem to be an expression that Paul involuntarily glides into in citing the language of the Master. The fact that this verse is linked to the preceding narrative by γάρ (*for*), implies that the apostle is here beginning to speak in his own name. The expression may be paraphrased thus: *As the foregoing is a true statement of the original institution, therefore as often as ye eat this bread, etc.* The words "*ye do shew the Lord's death,*" are a very weak rendering of the original καταγγέλλετε, which means, literally, *ye proclaim, or announce*. This proclamation must not be taken as merely a declaration by *action*. It can only be taken as being done *orally*. How this was done, we are not told exactly. However, the proclamation in question was considered an essential. It is this announcement or proclamation by the unworthy, that makes the condemnation of the next verse so strong. "*Till he come,*" ἄχρις οὗ ἐλθῇ,

literally, *until he shall have come*. This event was looked upon as being close at hand. Keeping this in view, "until" has a peculiar meaning.

27. "*Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.*" "Wherefore" is sufficiently pointed, and connects the two verses. The open proclamation, referred to in last verse, makes the hypocrisy greater, and thus the sin is strongly emphasized. In the passage "whosoever shall eat this bread, *and* drink this cup,"  $\eta$  does not stand for *καί*. It means that if a man partake of the one "*or*" the other, he is guilty. Thus a distinction is made emphatic, and a possibility implied that either one could be partaken of unworthily, independent of the other. Here is a nice point of distinction. We must remember that the bread was partaken of *during* the meal. See the announcement of Matthew and Mark: "And as they were eating, Jesus took bread," etc. And the cup was used *after* the supper. See the expression in verse 25: "When he had supped." Thus it may be possible to partake of the bread worthily, while the cup may be taken in an unworthy state of heart. "*Shall be guilty of the body and blood.*" If the condition of the heart is unworthy the occasion, the body and blood of Jesus, with which we enter into communion by partaking of them, can only be abused and profaned.

28. "*But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.*" Now in order to avoid this guilt and sin, let a man thoroughly test his frame of mind. "*And so let him eat.*" This implies that a man must not examine himself with the purpose of making him feel unworthy. It is rather intended to bring a man out of the wrong into the right condition of heart.

29. "*For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.*" It seems ἀναξίως (unworthily) is spurious, and is omitted in the Revised Translation. Therefore, the text should read, "He who eats and drinks, eats and drinks a judgment to himself, if he does not discern the Lord's body." "*Damnation*" (κρίμα). The old word in King James' translation, with which we are all so familiar, carries with it the meaning of eternal punishment, when in truth the word in its meaning is much milder. That κρίμα means a temporal judgment is substantiated by the context. Verses 30 and 31 implies this as the penalty of unworthy communicating, and that such *judgments* appeared to him as timely chastisements, employed by God to avert the eternal condemnation that threaten those who continue in sin. This word κρίμα is used elsewhere, and mostly in a temporal sense. (See Rom.

2: 2; 3: 8; 13: 2; Gal. 5: 10.) “*Not discerning the Lord’s body.*” This refers to the emblem of his sacred body, with which we enter into communion by partaking of the Lord’s ordinance, and respecting which we ought to form a proper judgment, so that we comprehend its sacredness and deep significance. When we remember that the church of Corinth forgot themselves, and turned the sacred supper into a banquet and carousal, of which selfishness was the chief principle, how significant is this verse! We are to recognize its sacred import, and every feeling of a carnal, selfish nature must be eradicated, so that we can enjoy the full spiritual blessing that the Lord intended it should bring.

30. “*For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.*” Here Paul quotes instances where judgment had fallen on many of them. In those days chastisements from the Lord in the shape of sickness and death were common. Probably no more common than now, but there was this difference: then they were recognized as such, now they are not. It seems hard to establish a definite distinction between *ἀσθενεῖς* (weak ones) and *ἄρρωστοι* (sickly ones); the words imply two stages of physical sickness, of which the latter is the more serious.

31. “*For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.*” The word *διεκρίνομεν*, here rendered

“*judge*,” is parallel to δοκιμαζέτω of verse 28, there translated “*examine*.” This is the idea presented here. The last word “*judged*” is ἐκρινόμεθα in the Greek, and has quite a different meaning. This is only another instance of the inaccuracy of King James’ translation, and which makes it hard to comprehend without the help of the original Greek. The true sense of this verse is: “For if we would examine ourselves, we should not be judged.” The Revised Edition has it: “But if we discerned ourselves.” This is a commentary on verses 28 and 29.

32. “*But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.*” “Judged,” here κρινόμενοι is the same as the last *judged* of last verse. This is an explanation of verse 29. The meaning is very plain. Verse 31 says, “For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged,” and then in this verse, Paul continues, “But when we do receive a judgment [by temporal sufferings], we are chastened by the Lord, in order that we may not be condemned [at the last judgment] with the world.” The use of the first person gives this and the previous verse the form of a general statement. It seems as if the apostle does not desire to confine this statement to the state of affairs at Corinth, but wishes to let it have a wider and more universal application.

33. "*Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another.*" Paul, now in his closing remarks, comes back to the grievance for which this church was first arraigned—that of selfishness and lack of harmony. In the words of the Authorized Version, the accusation was, "For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken." A common-sense translation of the same verse reads, "For each begins to eat what he has brought for his own supper, before anything has been given to others, so that while some are hungry, others are drunken." This, the apostle argues, is a violation of every principle and design of the Lord's Supper. Now, as a remedy, he virtually says, "Therefore, my brethren, when you meet for the Lord's Supper, let none begin to eat by himself, while he leaves others unprovided for." "*Tarry one for another.*" Some scholars translate this, *Receive ye one another*, for ἐκδέχεσθε is rendered *to look for, to await, expect, receive*. However we may translate this word, it is intended as a contrast to despising other guests, and keeping them from enjoying the same privileges as ourselves. This is what the Greek word means, no matter what we may render it. Therefore, Paul lays down, as a first principle of the Lord's Supper, that all must be on an equality, irrespective of financial and

social standing. This principle is contained in the words translated "Tarry one for another."

34. "*And if any man hunger, let him eat at home; that ye come not together unto condemnation. And the rest will I set in order when I come.*" The satisfying of hunger is that which is to be done at our homes. The Lord's Supper or *agape* should not be used as a meal for such carnal and material purposes. It has a higher significance. Some critics understand this to mean, "If any one has such keen hunger that he cannot wait for the distribution, let him rather take a previous meal at home." But the original does not go so far. The principle laid down here is that the Lord's Supper is not for the satisfying of hunger. Our private tables at our own homes are for this purpose. But Jesus institutes this for a higher purpose than merely that of gratifying carnal appetites. This closing verse, instead of striking a blow at the meal as instituted by the Lord on his last night, upholds the practice, and only condemns the carnal tendency. Throughout this whole narrative of the institution, and the accompanying criticism of the action of the Corinthian brethren, there has been woven a golden thread of actual understanding that the Lord's Supper was a meal, around which clustered the grandest thoughts and principles connected with the Christian practice. But, as a meal, it was

possible that the great feature of its design would be forgotten, while the practice might be continued, and the appetite satisfied at the expense of the soul. Our houses are for the purpose of attending to the wants of the body, so let us not turn the house of God into a mere place of eating and drinking. Let us keep prominently in our minds that Paul nowhere condemns proper and legitimate eating and drinking at the Lord's table; neither does he condemn the meal. He only condemns the carnal, selfish and disorderly observance of a religious rite. The outward order and arrangements, and not the doctrine, is what meets his disapprobation. Then he sums up his reasons for complaining, "That ye come not together unto condemnation." Or, in other words, "Lest your meetings should bring judgment or condemnation upon you." And what can be more reasonable?

## CHAPTER XXI.

### THE OBJECT OF ORDINANCES.

The object of man's creation, and its failure — The manner of God's teaching — Jesus comes as the World's Teacher — The Lord's Supper not a popular feast to-day — "Ordinances" should elevate — Why the Lord's Supper is unpopular.

*"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another."* John 13: 34.

*The object of man's creation, and its failure.*

Long, long ago, when religion was in its infancy, the human family had passed through some terrible experiences. Created as free moral agents, with the privilege and opportunity of following or neglecting the great Creator, and at the beginning surrounded with everything that would make them happy and elevate their thoughts, our first parents allowed themselves to be led away from their duty to God. Lower and lower did man descend into the depths of evil, until, so far as the object of his creation was concerned, he became a total failure. It is not in the province of this work to explain the object of man's creation, how he was created in the image and after the likeness of the infinite Creator himself, and given the dominion over all creation. Man thus became a little god himself. In this creation, Jehovah demanded the willing,

intelligent, and unselfish service and worship of this the Lord's greatest work. We have only to read the history of man in the early stages of his existence to see what a terrible failure he was. Then came the flood, and the commencement of a new world. This time, the survivors of the flood had what our first parents did not have—experience and knowledge. We have no knowledge of any divine law for the guidance of man, during the antediluvian period, except that which was written on the tablets of the heart by the invisible finger of God. But man had not proceeded far in this second era, until Jehovah, through the channel of his chosen people, gave the human family a code of laws that were to regulate the conduct of man toward God and his fellow-man. These laws are called the ten commandments. They form the foundation of all the subsequent teachings of the Lord. Then commenced the great schooling of humanity. God had an exalted destiny in view for man. He was created in the likeness and image of God, but how sadly had he fallen! God desired to restore him to his original condition of goodness and innocence. So from the brute to which he had descended, he began to climb and reach out for a greater and higher manhood. Love was the great lever that was to accomplish this gigantic task. Love is the principle of the ten

commandments, love to God and love to man. If love were the mainspring of our actions toward God, then there would be no idol worship, no neglect of our duty to our Creator; and so, also, in our conduct to each other, if love were the foundation of our actions, there would be no stealing, murder, blasphemy, adultery, or any of the sins that injure or mar the happiness of our fellow-man.

*The manner of God's teaching.* Let us notice the manner in which God instructs man in these spiritual lessons. God so created man that his intelligence and reason are the great gate-way into the soul. This intelligence is reached through the senses. Thus God reaches into the inner citadel of the heart. Here God, as the first great Schoolmaster, teaches his chosen people through the common experience of life, the way to that higher and grander existence for which he was created. The first great lesson is taught through the sacrifices and offerings of the old law. As we have already hinted at this, we will not linger here. Then came the deliverance from Egypt. The story is so familiar to us. The feast of the Passover was instituted. When the chosen race occupied the Land of Promise, and the families were gathered around the table, the youngest persons would ask why this feast was so kept. Then the older ones would relate the great deliverance from a

terrible bondage. The circumstance would thus be kept fresh in their minds, and it would arouse gratitude in the hearts of the younger ones. But this was not all. Moses the great deliverer of Israel, had prophesied of another Deliverer who would lead his people to a grander victory. David, Isaiah, and the other prophets, all spoke of this coming Deliverer. The Passover became not only an historical feast, but a typical one, pointing forward to a greater deliverance. The pious Jews looked forward with hope to this future bliss. Through all the vicissitudes of their existence as a nation, when away from their own dear land, grinding out a weary life in a monotonous captivity they cheered their sorrowful hearts with the beautiful picture painted in the bright colors of hope and a sure prophecy. Here God used this national feast as the means of leading their minds heavenward. Indeed, this can be said of all the feasts and ceremonies of the Mosaic law. As the Jewish nation grew older, and became more intelligent, the spiritual import of these outward rites became more important, until they became actually necessary to their spiritual existence. They grew in wisdom and piety, until we see such noble characters as Mary, Joseph, Anna, Elizabeth, John the Baptist, Lazarus, the apostles, the shepherds, the wise men, and a whole army of men and women,

coming forth from the ignorance and wickedness around them. This showed the success of the Lord's method of teaching.

*Jesus comes as the World's Teacher.* When humanity's Great Teacher came upon the stage to demonstrate what a pure, active, loving life should be, he did not deviate from the former method of teaching. He gathered from the vast field of the commonalities of life such matter as would suit his design, and these he consecrated to a higher and spiritual purpose. These consecrated customs under the teaching of the Lord became the recognized ordinances of the church through all ages. Here was immersion or the dipping of the body in water. How common was this in the warm climate of the East. All were acquainted with it. Jesus took this and consecrated it to a religious use. It became one of the Lord's object lessons. We have already noticed its design. Now came the consecration of a common meal, which was to become the means of teaching a spiritual truth. We have hinted at the typical character of the Passover. We know how sad and disconsolate were the old Jews when carried away into captivity among strangers, and they could no longer enjoy the feast of the Passover. Then their joy was correspondingly great when they came back, and could once more celebrate what to them was

a feast of hope as well as a feast of remembrance.

*The Lord's Supper not a popular feast to-day.* Although we have seen that the early Christians observed the Lord's Supper, which, too, was known as the Feast of Charity or Love Feast, yet, to-day, we are sorry to say, it is very seldom observed. All that remains of it, in some most religious communities, is the Eucharist. And we are sorry to say that the observance of the Lord's Supper is not only nearly obsolete, but those that refuse or neglect to observe it, ridicule and oppose it with a persistency something like the obstinacy of the old-time Pharisees. The great cry of those who oppose it is that it is not commanded by the Lord, and that Paul in I. Corinthians 11, actually condemns it. As we have already given a very fair exegesis of that passage, we will be content with merely repeating here, that Paul did not condemn the use *but the abuse* of the Lord's Supper. He merely says, "This is not to eat the Lord's supper." Now what was "not to eat the Lord's supper"? Why, the gluttonous, selfish, clannish manner in which these people feasted. Paul says they turned it into their own supper. To be the Lord's Supper the Lord must preside, and we are merely guests. Now would Paul, or even the Lord himself, condemn a proper observance of the Lord's Supper

among us to-day? Assuredly not. Now what constitutes the Lord's Supper? The name itself seems to give the requisite information. It was a supper in which the Lord figured very prominently. Really there is but one supper recorded, which we could say was peculiarly the Lord's. That was the one eaten in the upper chamber at Jerusalem with his twelve apostles. At this supper he was the host—it was his. He provided for it through his directions given to the apostles, and the owner of that house had given everything over to the Lord, so that he was now the entertainer. In nearly every other meal recorded of him he was merely a guest. But here he was the host, so that we could say without hesitation, this was the Lord's Supper. Let us endeavor to see if the church has any authority from the Lord to perpetuate this feast, and what benefit it is supposed to bring to the church. If the supper is beneficial to the church, none ought to object to its observance.

*“Ordinances” should elevate.* We have already hinted that the observance of what are called “ordinances,” is intended to elevate mankind, and bring us nearer to God. Anything that will develop in the soul of man those graces and virtues that will make us happier and better, must be for good. This is the use of the ordinances of the Lord. We have been studying the ordinance of baptism, and

we have seen how it brings out that child-like disposition which a Christian ought to possess, and *proves* our willingness to bow to the decree of God. By baptism we manifest our willingness to surrender our will to the will of God. Then, as before stated, it symbolizes the washing away of the sins of the soul. And that is not all. The burial and resurrection here symbolized are full of teaching. Now the ordinance of the Lord's Supper is also full of lessons, which we will notice in our next chapter. The happiness of man seems to be the primary object of our Lord. These are principles that naturally bring happiness. These principles thus become graces of the soul. They are graces because they beautify the nature of man. We recognize the value of things around us in accordance with their ornament and use, as they may add to the well-being of man. Thus whatever will make the soul of man useful by helping others and making them happy, will call out the admiration of mankind. So love, hope, temperance, patience, joy, brotherly kindness, and the sister graces, when they shine out practically in a man's life, make him happy and useful, and therefore beautiful. So we claim that the observance of these ordinances develops these virtues. It is these that lift man up. The more we have of them, the more God-like we are. So in advocating these ordinances,

we have only the developing of these principles in view. They lift us up and out of our carnal nature. The benefit of the ordinances to the soul can only be judged by the amount of good to the man in making him better.

*Why the Lord's Supper is unpopular.* Imitation is a principle of human nature. It is natural, and therefore the means by which a great part of our knowledge and many of our habits are acquired. It is powerful, moulding character, and controlling and directing life. Upon this principle of imitation human life develops itself. This principle is very manifest in religion. Upon the fact of imitation, the growth of the man in spiritual graces depends. We imitate Jesus because it is safe to follow an infallible example. So when we see in the life of Jesus some act that is both significant and full of teaching, is it any wonder that the church desires to perpetuate it? Our Lord taught some lesson in every action of his life. But there are some of these acts that are more fitted to become lessons than others. In the matter under consideration, it is hard for some people to see that the Lord commanded the disciples to continue to observe this feast. The bread and wine, as emblems of his blood and body, are accepted by all Christians. The early disciples, however, did not hesitate to observe the feast. To them it was full

of meaning, and so they kept it, and felt strengthened. Then why do we not enjoy the same benefit to-day? We have only one answer to this question. We believe that the feast was abused, and became a means of harm instead of good, as it did in the Corinthian church, so, that after a while, as we have seen in the previous chapter, it was almost altogether discontinued. So the feast may be unpopular to-day because it is not observed in a Christian manner. It probably becomes "our own supper," too much stress laid on the feasting and eating part, so that the old complaint may still become true, they "do not discern the Lord's body." Selfishness may reign in the observance of the feast, when love should be the great principle. So it becomes unpopular. Let us make the feast a feast of love as well as of eatables, and the beauty of the ordinance will be admired.

## CHAPTER XXII.

### THE DESIGN OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

Is the Lord's Supper truly a meal?—The Supper and communion were observed in one ordinance—What design did the Lord have in view?—It is a commemorative service—It promotes unity and brotherly love—It has direct reference to the present—It points to the future—It is a sigillative or sealing ordinance—It is a nutritive ordinance—At the Lord's Supper we dedicate ourselves to him—This feast virtually says we have sinned—It also tells us of our salvation—It is an invitation to feed upon Christ—It is a family feast—The record of the Brethren Church.

*"I am the bread of life."* John 6: 35.

*Is the Lord's Supper truly a meal?* Of what does the Lord's Supper consist? and of what benefit is it to the individual and the church? are important and vital questions. For a complete and comprehensive reply we must rely solely upon the New Testament. There is enough in the tendencies of men's minds to account for the very many opinions that are in existence. Paul gives us the name of this institution—the Lord's Supper. When one who is unbiassed, investigates with the intention of answering the above questions, he will be forcibly impressed with the name. The word supper (*δελτινον*) at once gives the character of the institution. It is a meal. We have five accounts of the institution of this ordinance—one in each of the

four Gospels and one in the Epistle to the Corinthians. Since Paul tells us that his account was imparted to him directly by the Lord, we are inclined to study him closely. In four of these accounts of the Lord's last meal, we find that Jesus selected bread and wine as emblems of his body and blood, which he directs his disciples to use for a particular purpose. When we meet with the expression "Lord's Supper," to what does he apply it? Would we, for one moment, think he intended to confine it to the bread and wine alone? Remembering that supper (*δειπνον*) means the principal meal of the evening, and that all of the records give an account of a supper, and all but John mention the institution of the bread and wine as a part of that meal, we could not apply the word to mean anything else than the supper itself. Then John gives this idea strength because he does not say anything about the bread and wine, but gives other incidents that took place on that eventful evening. It was an eventful evening and an eventful supper, and when we consider all the details, it is no wonder that it became important in the eyes of the disciples.

*The Supper and communion were observed in one ordinance.* Let us not forget how the institution of the Supper and that of the bread and wine are combined together. Matthew tells us, "As they

were eating, Jesus took bread," etc.; Mark says, "And as they did eat, Jesus took bread," etc.; Luke gives us to understand that the bread and wine were instituted during the supper; and Paul says, "That the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread," etc. Further on Paul mentions that the cup was taken "when he had supped," or, as Luke puts it, "after supper." In the minds of the disciples they were inseparable. So, indeed, will they be, with those who have no preconceived theory to uphold. But Paul says, "This is not to eat the Lord's supper." To what does he refer? The next verse (I. Cor. 11: 21) answers the question. They became very selfish and gluttonous, turning the sacred feast into a carousal. In the 33d verse he says, "When ye come together to eat." Eat what? Without any hesitation the reply would be—the meal or feast, which they had abused, and not merely the Eucharist, for the remainder of the verse says, "Tarry one for another," or, as the Greek implies, "*Receive or welcome* ye one another," as a contrast to despising the other guests, which they are accused of doing in verse 21. We must also keep in mind that the early disciples observed it as a meal. The "breaking of bread" so frequently met with in the Acts of the Apostles referred to this. So Jude also refers to certain irregularities as "spots in

your *feasts of charity*." Historians tell us very emphatically that the early Christians understood and observed the Eucharist in connection with a plain meal which they termed the Lord's Supper.\* But as we desire to cling to the New Testament in our investigation of the design, we do not need to refer to them.

*What design did the Lord have in view?* Paul in his record is referring to the Lord's Supper. This implied the supper where Jesus was the host. During every other meal referred to in the New Testament, in which the Lord took a part, it was invariably as a guest. But the Lord, through the kindness of the unnamed benefactor, on this occasion was enabled to entertain his disciples. Thus the meal eaten in that upper chamber was truly the Lord's Supper. Paul in reciting the details of this supper gives us an insight into the object the Lord had in view. After the breaking of the bread, the Lord said, "*This do in remembrance of me.*" Then after the institution of the cup, he said, "This do ye, as oft as ye drink it, *in remembrance*

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\* Dr. Stanley, Dean of Westminster, London, England, in his "Christian Institutions," page 48, thus alludes to the falling away of the "Supper": "Finally the meal itself fell under suspicion. Augustine and Ambrose condemned the thing itself, as the apostle had condemned its excesses, and in the fifth century that which had been the original form of the Eucharist was forbidden as profane by the councils of Carthage and Laodicea. It was the parallel of the gradual extinction of the bath in baptism."

*of me.*" Then he continues, "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye proclaim [so the word is]\* the Lord's death till he come." To bring to "remembrance," then, "the Lord's death," or rather the Lord himself in his death, was the specific object of the Eucharist at least. But Luke gives us some valuable testimony as to the object of the supper. When Jesus and his disciples had surrounded the table, and the approaching Passover feast was the topic of conversation, the Lord said, "With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you [not this meal, but the Passover which you all expect to celebrate to-morrow] before I suffer: for I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God." Here is a direct reference to a feast. To what feast did he refer? Without doubt it is the feast of eternity which John, in Revelation 19: 9, calls the "marriage supper of the Lamb." The same is no doubt referred to in Luke 12: 37: "Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them."

*It is a commemorative ordinance.* The Brethren Church in observing this ordinance of the Lord's

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\*See Exegesis in chapter 20, on verse 26.

Supper, conducts the services so that all the institutions of that eventful evening are faithfully kept. This was the Lord's last night. What a feast it was! The lessons he was teaching them, they were hardly able to comprehend. This was the Lord's last supper, and no wonder that the great masters have endeavored to perpetuate the scene on canvas. What a scene! But the Lord wants it painted on the heart. How we love to dwell on it! Even before they had taken their places he had taught his disciples by washing their feet, what constituted true Christian humility. Then came the marvelous supper. The Lord of glory entertaining his faithful followers, not chosen from the wealthy, influential, or learned, but from the hard-fisted sons of honest toil. That even one was a scoundrel and a traitor, only paints the Lord's character in brighter colors. This wonderful meal has been contemplated by the Christians for over eighteen centuries, and it has lost none of its power and beauty. It still wields a powerful influence over the heart of the honest believer, and fills his soul with admiration, and draws him closer to his Savior. There is no ordinance that the mind of man could invent that would move his soul toward the Savior like this memorial service—the triune ordinance of the Lord's Supper, communion, and feet-washing. How could the church commemorate the Lord's last

night on earth more substantially? Every sentiment that should throb in a Christian heart is here awakened.

*It promotes unity and brotherly love.* With but few exceptions, all Christian bodies observe a communion, although it is sometimes called the Lord's Supper. Is it not strange that what is called communion, and was intended to unite, through different interpretations of its nature, has created an insurmountable barrier of separation between the different bodies? But that is the result of allowing the selfish, carnal heart to rule. When we come to the Lord's table, allowing his Spirit to control us, there is no fear of discord. We come as members of the Lord's family. God is our Father, Jesus is our Elder Brother. We have one common hope and object. We are fed from the Lord's table. Where there is a proper spirit, or rather the same Spirit in every heart, there is union and brotherly love. These feasts and reunions cement our friendship and love as nothing else can.

*It has direct reference to the present.* It is the most efficacious of all the means of grace, not only to promote brotherly love, but to nourish religion in the soul. We do not consider that this mere partaking of the Lord's Supper communicates, in some mysterious manner, grace to believers; but just as God communicates his grace by the preaching of

the gospel, and as the soul receives strength and encouragement when we meet with those who are moved by the same impulses. The Lord's Supper is peculiarly efficacious, because it presents the great doctrine of the atonement more impressively before us than any other ordinance.

*It points us to the future.* It is strange that most people, in their eagerness to emphasize the commemorative character of the feast, forget this very important feature. Not only by the partaking of the bread and wine do we proclaim the Lord's death *until he come*, but the Lord's Supper is a memorial of an absent Lord, with whom we shall shortly meet. Luke very emphatically tells us (ch. 22: 16) it is a type of the grander and greater feast of eternity. Thus the Lord's Supper is itself a foretaste of heaven, and is an emblem of the marriage supper of the Lamb. By having our minds centered on heaven and its joys, our affections are raised from this world, and with the eye of faith we look within the veil, and anticipate our reunion with departed friends, and the Lord Jesus Christ himself.

*It is a sigillative or sealing ordinance.* When Jesus said, "This is my body," "This is my blood," it implied that he was peculiarly present at this ordinance. We also "shew [or proclaim] the Lord's death till he come." Thus the sealing was

mutual. Just as the Jews considered they were Abraham's seed, made so by circumcision, we are told how Abraham received the sign of circumcision, as "a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised" (Rom. 4: 11). So in this sense, we seal our faith by partaking of the bread and wine. Doing this we actually proclaim or confess Christ; then also Jesus *seals* his promise when we partake of the emblems instituted by himself.

*It is a nutritive ordinance.* Had commemoration alone been the object in view, it might have been attained without requiring the bread and wine to be partaken. The mere presence of the bread and wine before the eyes of the disciples, with the words, "This is my body," "This is my blood," "This *see* ye [and not *do* ye] in remembrance of me," might have answered. But this ordinance was intended, beyond doubt, to nourish believers. We are taught that we must partake of Jesus, if we expect spiritual strength. There are certain elements necessary to the upbuilding of the physical system, which are received in food. So spiritually, certain principles are necessary to the development of the soul. This nourishment is received when we partake of the body and blood of Jesus in emblem. This principle of feeding on Jesus is carried out in the feast, by partaking of

the food consecrated for this special service; we are reminded of the past, we are encouraged to look forward, and our hearts are strengthened by the knowledge of the Lord's promise; thus we really are feeding on Christ in every particular.

*At the Lord's Supper we dedicate ourselves to him.* It is a solemn dedication. In I. Corinthians 11: 26, Paul says, "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew [proclaim or announce] the Lord's death till he come." This implies a confession, and we are continually renewing our allegiance to the Lord; so that each time we take our places around the Lord's table we actually renew our covenant, or dedicate ourselves to his service. By dedication we mean that we will be more devoted to the Lord than to anything else. As we mingle with our fellow-creatures in the great struggle of life, we cannot help but become carnal and selfish; but when we come to the Lord's Supper, and contemplate his spotless life and unselfish love, we see our shortcomings, and in our gratitude we resolve to do better, and be, at least, some little more worthy of his love to us. So in proclaiming or announcing his death, which was the result of his love, we cannot help but be touched.

*This feast virtually says we have sinned.* When the scene of the last supper is thus vividly brought

before us, our minds are busily at work. As one event after another of that eventful evening is brought before us, we cannot help but remember that it was the sins of the human family that brought about the terrible tragedy we are commemorating. How vividly it tells us we are sinful creatures, that we belong to the fallen race!

*It also tells us of our salvation.* What a beautiful consolation there is in this ordinance! We are told of the saving power of Jesus. While we are reminded of the sinfulness of mankind, the greatest lesson is to tell us of what the Lord accomplished for us. After having acknowledged our sins and our faith in his atonement, then comes the assurance of his pardon. The peace and joy that fill our hearts when we are reminded of what the Lord has in store for us, seem to give us a comfort that is so necessary amidst the sorrows and trials of life.

*It is an invitation to feed upon Christ.* The very idea of a supper signifies this. It is the Lord's Supper. He was the host not only on the night of its institution, but he is so still. This is not the Lord's Supper merely in the sense that he instituted it, but that he supplies us continually with what we most desire — himself. He has instituted the emblems so that we can continually feed on him. So that the more of Jesus we have in us, the

more we will grow like him. Feeding constantly on the feast of divine love, we will become more loving.

*It is a family feast.* Only the members of the Lord's family are invited and welcome at his table. It is God's will and desire that his children should thus feast together. So in these meetings we are not only taught that God is our Father, but that we are brethren. The church is our home, and there we love to meet that our bonds of union may be cemented. If Christians had this sentiment thoroughly impressed on their hearts, so that we would have this idea carried out in our every day life, that even those who are out of Christ are still our brethren, but erring and wandering ones, what a little heaven this earth would be! No other ordinance could so substantially teach us this truth that we are of one family, of one blood, and that we owe each other nothing but love. After a while cruel death comes and causes a division among us, but here we are reminded that the Lord still lives and rules, and we are taught the certainty of another reunion in eternity, where we can enjoy a never-ending love-feast.

The confession of our sins, the glad acceptance of salvation, the consecration of the heart to God, tender and compassionate love to our brethren—to all these acts and sentiments of the Christian life,

the Lord's Supper gives emphasis and expression.

*The record of the Brethren Church.* The members of the Brethren Church in placing themselves on record as Christian workers, desire only to be followers of the Lord Jesus Christ, and so have no other authority than the New Testament. The Church also recognizes that plainness and simplicity are great essentials to the carrying out of the will of God, and acknowledges no other leader nor teacher than Jesus. Neither does she feel herself under any obligations to recognize any existing theories or tenets where they do, or merely *seem* to conflict with the Word of God. So in partaking of the Lord's Supper, we come to the New Testament for our practice. We have seen by the testimony presented in former chapters that the early disciples observed the Lord's Supper by having a meal or a feast in connection with the Eucharist. We have shown how the records of the New Testament connect the last supper with the institution of the communion—that in the eyes of the apostles they were inseparable. We have seen that even Paul, who is quoted as condemning the meal, only condemned its excesses. We have also proven that this meal eaten by the Lord and his disciples was not the Jewish Passover. So it cannot be claimed that the first disciples, as Jews, still clung

to the Passover, and thus endeavored to unite the two dispensations. Why so many of our most modern commentators will take this stand in the face of John's incontrovertible testimony is a mystery. We are glad, however, that the most learned of even modern Bible students, besides the grand array of ancient and mediæval commentators, have taken the Gospel view of it and endorsed John.\* We will not attempt to even guess at the object any one would have in proving that the last supper was the Jewish Passover.

Previous education may have much to do in helping us to form opinions and in moulding our religious faith, but surely any one throwing off all other influences cannot help but conclude that the Lord's Supper, according to the apostolic idea, referred to the Lord's last supper, as recorded by the four evangelists and Paul. It was to the apostles of the greatest importance, and in commemorating the death and sufferings of Christ, it is no wonder that they should keep the feast as the Lord and his apostles did. In this way they would lose none of the Lord's teaching. Even were there no

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\*As an evidence of this we present the view of Dr. F. W. Farrar, of London, England, who has earned for himself very prominent fame as a Bible student. In his "Life of Christ," he says: There are ample reasons for believing that this was not the ordinary Jewish Passover, but a meal eaten by our Lord and his apostles on the previous evening, Thursday, Nisan 13th, to which a quasi-Paschal character was given, but which was intended to supersede the Jewish festival by far deeper and diviner significance.

direct "thus saith the Lord" for it, the great importance attached to it, and the language of the Lord himself recorded in Luke 22: 16, gives it an undoubted spiritual signification. Because the Corinthian church abused the feast and acted in an unchristian manner is no argument for its prohibition.

The Brethren Church claims that when it is observed with Gospel simplicity, it must be beneficial. An attempt to dictate *what* shall be eaten at the feast must be disastrous and kill the spiritual lessons that are intended to be taught. It is a feast, a meal, and as such, must necessarily, to a certain extent, partake of a carnal nature. The great trouble for the church of to-day, as well as for the Corinthian church of old, will be to keep it from getting too carnal. This meal has a very deep spiritual signification, so the spiritual must be the most prominent. So in our eagerness to be sure that it is a *meal*, we must be careful lest we allow it to be a meal, and a meal only, in the carnal sense of the word. So Paul advises the church on this point. If they are hungry, they must not expect to go to the church to satisfy this hunger. That must be done at home, at their common meals. This is a religious feast. But how can it be a *meal*, if we do not prepare and eat abundantly as we do at any other meal? some may ask. The only way to answer the question is to use

good, solid judgment, and keep in view its religious and spiritual character. Like the bread and wine, it is an emblem of something grander and better. We are satisfied with a small piece of the consecrated bread, and a mere sip of wine. This we believe answers the design of the Lord as well, if not better, than if more was used. So in the preparation of the supper, let simplicity and frugality be the rule. It is an emblem of the great feast of eternity. The spread tables, the provided food, and the presence of the church, are the principal objects. We partake of it, and the heart is stirred up because we see in it the Lord's instituted emblem of the eternal feast. Hope and encouragement fill the soul, and we go from the Lord's table more encouraged to fight life's battles. If we depart from simplicity, and appeal to the appetite of the body, we know from ten thousand experiences that the carnal tendencies of our humanity are likely to kill the spiritual teaching. Everything should be done that would lead, rather than direct, the soul to spiritual meditation. It was not intended, at least we would gather that from Paul's advice to the Corinthian church, that we should copy after our ordinary meals in preparing the Lord's Supper. It should undoubtedly have the character of a meal, for upon this the emblem rests. But under no circumstances should

we make it a rule that the substantiality of the feast must be judged by the amount or quality of the food on the table.

We are there to observe the Lord's Supper. It has a spiritual signification. So whatever would have the least tendency to prevent spiritual meditation should at once be abandoned. The Lord's Supper is a means of grace. Its object is to arouse and develop hope, love, and joy, in the heart. And where it is observed according to common sense and the gospel, this is the result. We need these Christian graces as we travel through life. It is by the development of these virtues that we are to judge of the benefit this ordinance has for the Christian. If love, hope, and joy, are not aroused, then it has been a failure. When we truly recognize each other as members of the same family, our love for each other is intensified; so, also, when we can span the chasm of time and anticipate the joy of our eternal home, our hopes become brighter; and again, when we can honestly realize that we are forgiven, redeemed creatures, our joy is made greater; thus we feel more encouraged to go on our pilgrimage through life's thorny way.

This meal also, as we have before noticed, unites the church as nothing else can. It is impossible to find a congregation of Christians, without finding them of every grade of wealth, influence, and posi-

tion. Around the Lord's table we meet on a common level; all are equal. This is one of the great characteristics of the feast. The church of the living God has no poor and no rich among her membership; we are all merely brethren and the Lord's children. So in providing for the Lord's Supper, while there is no rule for it, would it not be safe to follow the apostolic mode? Let each bring what he can. This is brought as an offering to the Lord, and is placed on the tables, and all, as the Lord's guests, partake of what has been brought and dedicated to him. But while we may have but little of this world's goods, there is one thing which we can all bring—that is charity. Remember it is a love-feast, so it must be the principal dish. With an abundance of love, even if other articles are scarce, there will be a feast upon which the soul can feed, and the Lord and his angels will look down and smile their approbation upon us.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### FEET-WASHING AS AN ORDINANCE.

Its practice in early days—The condition of the disciples' hearts—The incidents of the feast—Peter's refusal—Is feet-washing an ordinance—It is an emblem of love—It is a lesson of humility—It is an act of submission—It is a symbol of purification—It is intended to teach equality—Objections.

*"If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet."*—John 13: 14.

*Its practice in early days.* Feet-washing, as a particular custom and ceremony, had its origin in the Eastern countries. In those warm regions, the climate and peculiar mode of dress made the washing of feet a constant necessity, and even a luxury. But it is not the custom of mere cleansing the feet that we are considering. Jesus, on the night of his betrayal, as he was about to partake of the Last Supper with his disciples, consecrated this common custom into a religious ordinance. The very positive teaching of the Lord, as recorded in the thirteenth chapter of John, exalted this custom so completely, and vested it with such high spiritual meaning, that, for many centuries, the ceremony of Feet-washing was considered a very sacred and prominent institution of the Christian church. It

was not very long, however, until the command of Jesus began to be observed in the letter only. The spiritual lesson was thus lost, and it soon became an incumbrance and a mere ceremony, and eventually dwindled away. Augustine speaks of the practice in his time. When it became a mere ceremony, to be performed only once a year, not only the value of its observance was reduced to its minimum, but great positive disadvantage attended it. In proportion as the spirit of the command was lost, the mere ceremony was exalted and adorned. In the council of Toledo, A. D. 694, a certain day was fixed upon which it was to be observed. Bernard of Clairvaux tried to convert the ceremony into a sacrament, but without success. In the Greek Church it was observed with unusual emphasis. In the middle ages, it was observed in the Roman Church chiefly at the installation of bishops and coronation of princes. In Greek convents, and at the Russian court, it is still practiced with great solemnity. In the papal court, in the regal courts of Vienna, Munich, Madrid, and Lisbon, and in Roman Catholic cathedrals and convents, it is still observed by the washing of twelve persons, generally poor old men. In 1530, Cardinal Wolsey washed, wiped, and kissed the feet of fifty-nine poor men, at Peterborough. The practice was continued by English sovereigns, till the reign of

James II. The Church of England in its early days imitated the letter of the command. Luther, disgusted with the mockery of the ceremony, as observed by the Roman Church, bitterly opposed it, as being radically contrary to the teaching of the Master. Under such practices, it is no wonder that this sacred rite was abandoned.

*The condition of the disciples' hearts.* Before going into the depth of the subject, let us enter into the spirit of the scene and circumstances. Jesus and his disciples were on their way to Jerusalem, and the time of the Lord's departure was drawing nigh, when a strife arose among the disciples as to who should be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. The disciples had not yet grasped the true knowledge of the Lord's kingdom. They still thought of it as a temporal kingdom—that Jesus, as the Messiah, would restore the Israelites to the former glory they had enjoyed under David and Solomon. So, from a carnal stand-point, it was no wonder they were anxious to know who should occupy the most prominent position in their new kingdom. Even the mother of James and John was carried away with this common desire, and requested of the Lord the places of honor for her sons. This, then, was the state of the disciples' minds when they entered Jerusalem. When the great multitudes came out of the city and gave

Jesus a royal welcome, it only intensified the desires and hopes of his Galilean followers. Eventually, they came to the upper chamber, where the memorable meal was prepared. But before being seated, it was customary, and necessary, that their dusty feet should be washed. The unnamed host who had provided the room and entertainment, was so busy with his own affairs and preparations, that, at this particular time, it was impossible for him to extend the usual courtesies of having their feet washed. So he merely provided the water, utensils, and towels, and expected the guests, during this very crowded time, to perform this ceremony among themselves. It must be kept in mind, that Jerusalem was overflowing with strangers, who had come to keep the Passover. When the Master and his disciples were alone, the question faced them as to who should perform this menial service. Each one was puffed up with a selfish hope that he would occupy a very prominent position in the new kingdom, which they expected would be ushered in at any moment, and so all considered that this service should be performed by some one else. Peter thought Thomas could do this duty. Thomas considered that James might perform it. And so it went on, each one thinking that he was the most important, and no one offering his services. Then, while this question was

still agitating them, the Lord himself came forward and commenced the service they all shirked, and thus taught the greatest lesson that had ever been presented to them. Was there ever such a sight?—the Lord of glory girding himself with a towel for the purpose of performing the service of a slave! It is hard for our poor, selfish, carnal hearts to contemplate the action and the scene in its proper aspect.

*The incidents of the feast—Peter's refusal.* But let us continue our investigations. We can probably better imagine than relate the astonishment of the disciples when Jesus commenced this service. No doubt, they were dumbfounded. Their consciences were upbraiding them for their selfishness. Who can explain their thoughts, as they felt their fond hopes shattered? The cup of earthly honor, which seemed within their grasp, was snatched from their lips and dashed to the ground. Their feelings were a mixture of disappointment, self-condemnation, and shame. But none dare remonstrate or question, until the Lord came to Peter, who gave vent to his astonishment in the sentence, "Lord, dost *thou* wash my *feet*?" The emphasis is, primarily, on *σύ* (*thou*), and, secondly, on *πόδας* (*feet*). "*Thou*," the Master and Lord, whom we have followed and looked up to so long; "*Thou*," whose miracles have astonished the whole country;

"*Thou*," whom we expected to see crowned king of Israel; "*Thou*" wash my *feet*—the work of a slave! But Jesus tries to soothe the astonished feelings of Peter, and gently lead his mind to comprehend that there was a spiritual significance in the act. Jesus answered, "Thou art not able to comprehend the meaning of this just now; but have a little patience; after a while you will understand its signification." But no; with his characteristic impetuosity, Peter cried out, "Thou shalt never wash my feet." Then Jesus replied, with what sounds very much like a threat, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me." Here the Lord is beginning to open the eyes of the disciples to the *necessity* of this act. Language cannot be plainer than this. Peter's peculiar condition of heart—mortification, pride, and a spirit of insubordination—was such that it would exclude him from fellowship with the Lord. Are there not too many of this disposition—an unwillingness to bow to the Savior's decree? But how rapid and radical was the change. The thought of a separation from the Lord brought Peter to his senses. Now he cries out that the Lord might wash him completely—"Not my feet only, but also my hands and my head." It is as if he had said, "If there is any virtue or blessing in the mere washing of the feet, then, O Lord, wash me entirely over." The scales were falling

from the eyes of the impetuous disciple. He was beginning to see, though dimly, that there was some blessing to follow. Jesus continues to enlighten him as to the spiritual significance of the act. Therefore Jesus says, *He who has bathed needs nothing further than to wash his feet* (which have been soiled again by the road); *rather is he* (except as to this necessary cleansing of the feet) *clean in his entire body*. To this particular incident we shall refer again, as an index to the design of the act.

*Is feet-washing an "ordinance"?* This has been a much disputed question. But the language of John 13:14 puts the matter beyond doubt, if we take language as the expression of thought and sentiment. "If I then, your Lord and Master [or *Teacher*], have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet." If this word "ought" was applied to something that was pleasant and gratifying to the carnal heart, it would be quoted, without hesitation, as great and unquestionable authority. But the washing of the feet is rather of a humiliating and, in many people's minds, of a degrading nature; therefore we shrink from its practice, and will endeavor to find every excuse for its non-observance. What is it that elevates any institution or practice to a church "ordinance"? We look upon ordinances as a means of grace, means of growth, means of blessing. The Chris-

tian church recognizes baptism as an ordinance, even if there is a difference of opinion as to its form; and baptism has no greater emphasis or command than that of feet-washing. So also of the Lord's Supper, and prayer and public worship, or any other generally accepted practice of the church. To elevate a practice to an ordinance of the church, it is necessary to have not only the Lord's *command*, but his *example*. This is the case in the ordinance of feet-washing, as it is in the case of baptism or prayer; indeed, no more so in the instance of the two latter than in that of the former. The language of the Lord in the matter of feet-washing becomes very emphatic. In John 13:15 we have the command well buttressed: "For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you." Then still in the sixteenth verse the sentiment is repeated, and the whole circumstance is wound up with the glorious promise, in the seventeenth verse, "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them."

*It is an emblem of love.* That the Lord intended to teach his disciples that they owed a debt of love to each other, is a generally-acknowledged fact. A well-known writer says, concerning this, "If the Master had performed for his scholars an act at once so lowly yet so needful, how much more were the disciples themselves bound to consider any

Christian service whatever as a duty which each was to perform for the other." We naturally become selfish. We need to be reminded that we owe our fellow-mortals kindness and service. What an expression of the Savior's love was this act of feet washing! It can, also, according to the Lord's logic, become an expression of our love for one another. It teaches us that we are to stoop to aid one another here. Just as the institution of the bread and wine is intended to generate and develop our faith, so does this act bring forth our love for each other.

*It is a lesson of humility.* On this point the whole of Christendom is a unit. We must not forget the condition of the disciples' hearts—how selfish and conceited they were. Not one out of the twelve could make up his mind to undertake this service. Each one considered himself better than his fellow, and above the act. Then, the example of Jesus is all the greater and grander when we consider who he was, and his relation to the twelve. Pride of heart shall not be tolerated in the church. Jesus says, "The servant is not greater than his lord." And again, "If *I* then, *your Lord and Master*, have washed your feet; *ye* also ought to wash one another's feet." It is a lesson of humility. If we desire to learn the lesson well, let us follow his example, as he desired it. It is true, that one can

attend to this ordinance and still have pride of heart. But is this an excuse for its non-observance? Do not hypocrites partake of the Lord's Supper? Are they not baptized? But we do not expel these ordinances from the church on that account. The tendency of the heart is toward too much self-esteem, and the Lord recognizes the necessity of its being humbled.

*It is an act of submission.* We shrink from its observance because it is not in accordance with our ideas. We should remember that the Lord is the author of our salvation. This being repulsive and contrary to our liking makes it a trial. God tries the hearts of the faithful. Why the earnest, honest child of God does not find a pleasure in thus bowing to the will of God is probably an unanswerable question. The ordinance of feet-washing may be unpopular, and therefore quite a task to observe. Because it does not meet our views is really an argument in its favor, for "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." Looking over the history of God's dealings with his people, we find him ever acting in quite a different manner from what they would expect. Peter did not want to submit, but Jesus was very strong in his language. 'There is a satisfaction in submitting to the will of the Master that brings joy and

happiness to the heart. Yielding up our wills, ideas and opinions to the Lord, and submitting to his decree, is a very important part of Christianity.

*It is a symbol of purification.* Washing, all through the Bible, is a symbol of moral purification. How beautifully is this taught us in the reply of Jesus to Peter, already referred to in a former section of this chapter! When Peter was convinced of the necessity of submitting to this washing, he desired to be completely washed. The Lord told him that having been bathed, he now only needed to have his feet washed (verse 10). Baptism, called by the ancients, "the bath of regeneration," is a beautiful symbol of the washing away of the sins of the soul. Thus it is referred to by Paul, in Acts 22:16. There is no doubt that this is what the Lord desired to teach Peter, and us through Peter. We have been washed in the baptism of regeneration. We have felt our sins forgiven. But alas! as we travel along the road-way of life, our feet become soiled and stained by coming in contact with the dirt and filth of evil and selfishness. So it is not necessary that we be again washed in the bath of baptism, but the Lord instituted these minor washings as symbols of the necessity of constant cleansing. We cannot be cleansed too often. When we consider it as a symbol of purification or washing from daily sins, how

eagerly we should take advantage of this institution!

*It is intended to teach equality.* "The servant is not greater than his lord." We find sometimes that there is a disposition to domineer over one another. "Who shall be greatest?" was an old question. It is still to be found lurking in our hearts. Jesus teaches us we must all be equal. By a strange law, the greatest in the kingdom of heaven is the humblest. The law of heaven is that we must get down to go up, that we must stoop to conquer.

*Objections.* Many are the objections that are brought forward to nullify this ordinance. Of all, none, probably, is more senseless than the argument that the practice of feet-washing is indecent and contrary to the sentiment of our advanced civilization. But is not this rather an excuse? There is no doubt that many of the Lord's institutions are grossly abused. But the Lord has not commanded anything that will be a violation of the laws of decency and propriety. Man may so observe these institutions as to forget and annul the laws of common sense; but God must not be blamed for this. It was never intended that the ordinances of the church should be a common spectacle for those who do not believe in them. One of the most forcible lessons in the institution

of the Lord's Supper is that the Lord and his disciples withdrew to an upper chamber, away from the public gaze. These institutions are for the Lord's children alone. So history tells us they were thus observed by the early Christians. There is nothing that will more abstract the heart and mind from the solemnity of these services than the presence of a crowd of those who come merely for curiosity and criticism. If there is a time when the heart needs to be free from molestation and annoyance, it is when around the Lord's table. So the service of feet-washing should not be observed before the public gaze, but in private, where there are none present except those in sympathy with the Lord's plain teachings. Our own sense of propriety would dictate this, even had we not the example of the Lord. One consolation there is, that is above all others, when we cross the dark waters and enter the eternal city, the first to welcome us will be a Feet-washer.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### A TRIUNE ORDINANCE.

How man is in the "likeness" of God—No man without these principles—Faith—Hope—Love—The development of "Faith" by the communion—"Hope" strengthened by the Lord's Supper—"Love" represented in the ordinance of Feet-washing.

*"And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity."*  
I. Corinthians 13:13.

*How man is in the "likeness" of God.* When God created man, he was created "in the image and after the likeness" of the Divine Creator. By this expression we must not understand it to refer to a physical image or the likeness of a particular *form*; that is, we must not consider our great Creator as having an outward form, something similar to the physical appearance of a human being. The "likeness" and "image" has reference to the sentiments, principles, attributes, or passions that move the soul. God has endowed man with extraordinary power. In fact, he was created a little God. When Jehovah breathed into the inanimate clay, he filled man with those passions that elevate him so far beyond all other animal creation. In the text that heads this chapter, we find those passions and sentiments that are

the principal part of man's spiritual make-up. There is no man without the great principles of "faith, hope, and charity" (or love). It is in accordance with the development of these virtues that man's spiritual stature is to be measured. It is these principles in the human heart that bind the human family together; and it is these principles developed that binds us to God.

*No man without these principles — Faith.* It is impossible for man to exist without these cardinal virtues. Let us see. Is not man a creature of faith? Do not his very happiness and existence depend upon faith? Confidence is the lubricating element that keeps the vast social machinery of the world in motion. Confidence is the foundation and bulwark of human happiness and prosperity. Whatever man does, no matter how trivial or important, it is based on faith. Man lives and moves entirely by faith, even if he does not know it. He plows in faith; he reaps in faith; and every action of his life is based on the fact that he firmly believes in a certain result. It is in accordance with this faith that he is industrious and successful. Every man has this confidence to a greater or less extent. It is a gift of heaven. Even when man has met with disastrous failure and defeat, still he finds confidence enough in the heart to make new ventures and efforts. What great deeds have men

accomplished when their souls have been full of confidence.

*Hope.* See also the hope within the human soul. Man is, in every sense of the word, a creature of hope. When life has been darkened by failure, disaster, and disappointment, the white-winged angel of hope comes into the soul, flooding the heart with a radiancy that fills the whole being with courage and joy. Hope is the sunshine of the soul. And it is in accordance with the magnitude of this principle that the happiness of man rises or falls. Hope leads man on to superhuman efforts in the accomplishment of a certain purpose. Hope nerves him to continue his efforts for success in the very face of disappointment and failure. Hope fills the soul with fond anticipations and joy. Hope seems so natural to man, that it takes great and constant efforts on the part of man to extinguish the light of hope. No man can live without hope. It is the spark of life. It is the abundant presence of this heavenly light that will make the heart of man a little heaven. Then, on the other hand, it is the absence of hope that will turn his soul into a complete hell. It is the shutting out of this light of hope from the regions of the damned that makes hell so terrible.

*Love.* This is the greatest attribute that belongs to man. There is no greater happiness or pleasure

that comes into the soul of man than that which is the result of love. It is the mainspring of life. We cannot exist without it. God breathed it into the being of man at his creation, and it has been transmitted through the whole human family. Like faith and hope, only to a greater extent, life is dependent upon love. Man can no more help loving than he can help eating and thinking. He must love. There are sentiments of the heart that must be expended upon something or somebody. When this love is allowed to stray into forbidden and unnatural channels, misery and evil are the result. When, however, this love is trained so that it can be bestowed upon worthy objects, then happiness is the natural consequence. If a man cannot, or does not, love anything else, he will love himself. This self-love is often the beginning of many evils. Self-love is unnatural; for God never intended man to be a solitary being, living for himself alone. So if man is to answer the purpose of his creation, these principles, faith, hope, and charity, must be made prominent. So it is to develop these principles that the Lord instituted his ordinances. The more prominent these virtues become in the life of man, the more exalted and God-like will he become. We will now see how beautifully the triune ordinance of the Communion,

Lord's Supper and Feet-washing, brings out this trinity of graces—faith, hope, and charity.

*The development of faith by communion.* We have seen how, from a worldly stand-point, man is a creature of faith. The faith in our hearts is not merely to be bestowed upon the circumstances of this life. God desires that our confidence will have a higher purpose. Jesus is anxious to have our confidence. Faith is one of the conditions of salvation. The more faith we have in God, the more will our life be in accordance with his will. So now Jesus, on his last night on earth, instituted the bread and wine as emblems of his body and blood, which are to be the means of strengthening our faith. "Do this in remembrance of me," is the desire of the Lord. We are thus constantly reminded of the unfathomable love of God in Christ Jesus. Were it not for these periodical means of reminding, our faith would soon become sickly and die. But here Jesus has instituted a means by which our faith may be fed. When we partake of the bread and the wine, and remember that Jesus in giving these to the church said, "This is my body," "This is my blood," our minds are stirred up. We remember his promises; we remember his love; we feed upon him; and our confidence in the Lord becomes stronger. Man is so peculiarly constituted that the sentiments and

passions of the heart are often reached through some material or ceremony. How many of us have laid sacredly away some little token of a joy long since vanished from our grasp? It may be a little pair of shoes, or a simple toy or a faded and tear-stained letter. When, in the loneliness of our heart, we go to the little cupboard and bring forth the treasure, how eloquent it is in telling us the story of a buried hope and joy! How the memory goes surging back, and everything is brought vividly to our hearts! What a power there is in these mute and silent treasures! They are all that remain of the past, so we ponder over them, and the sight awakens and unlocks the secret recesses of the memory. Here is the strong link that binds us to that which has long ago passed away from us. So it is with these emblems, they unlock the powers of the soul, and the heart is drawn very close to the bleeding side of our crucified Lord.

*“Hope” strengthened by the Lord’s Supper.* The strengthening of our hope is as necessary as the development of faith. Hope is a great factor toward enabling us to perform life’s duties. Considering the effect of hope upon the heart and actions of man, it is no wonder that Paul has numbered it among the cardinal virtues of the soul. This life is so full of disappointments, and we have so many hardships and sorrows to pass through,

that without hope we would soon be engulfed in despair. So here the Lord has instituted a means by which we may derive consolation and encouragement. As we have already mentioned, in our investigation of the Lord's Supper, the Lord, when he said, "I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God," seemed to make it an emblem of a future state of bliss. In Revelation 19: 9, the joy and happiness of eternity is likened unto a feast — "the marriage supper of the Lamb." The Lord's parable concerning the waiting servant, recorded in Luke 12: 36, etc., has some such signification. Here the happiness of eternity is represented as a feast also, and the Lord himself coming forth to serve the faithful ones. So looking upon the Lord's Supper as an emblem of the great feast of eternity, it means our hope. It is the Lord's Supper; he is our Host. We assemble as his children, and when divine love is the binding tie, we can feed the soul on hope. How often are families broken up and divided by separation and the grave! We meet here only to part at the tomb. But here we have a symbol of the eternal feast of joy, where we know no separation will ever occur. The finger of hope points us forward to the great reunion in heaven. How it encourages us to realize and anticipate that glorious time! We need thus to have our attention especially called to the

future. The heart drinks in the consolation and takes courage. How weary would be the burden of life, if we were not thus cheered by the bright outlook that awaits us in the "Sweet by and by." In our family circle in my far off native land, we had a beautiful custom, the memories of which still linger in the soul with refreshing sweetness. It was always a rule in the family that each member should make every effort to meet around the family table on Christmas. No matter how far away we were, we looked forward to the meeting with joy, and we always managed to be there. How vividly the scene in that humble home among the hills of Wales is photographed on the mind! I see it now. Here was father at the head, and mother at the foot, their faces radiant with the joy they felt at having their children once more around them. The girls on one side, and the writer, as the only boy, on the other. Did I say the only boy? Oh no; years ago we had a little brother, but the Lord took our little Johnnie in his childhood. He was absent, but not forgotten. The little high-chair was always present, and no one occupied his place. We still remembered we had a brother in heaven. Oh, the joy of those reunions! How we looked forward to them! The old home rang with the echoes of the joy that beamed in every heart. But alas! the faces that were now

radiant with joy would soon be stained with tears, as we bade farewell. The last meeting came. The family is broken up. The old people peacefully rest in the village church-yard. We look forward with hope to another and an eternal meeting. So here we often surround the Lord's table in sorrow, but God sends us consolation and buoys us up with hope by his precious promises. As we meet here as the Lord's guests around his table, let us hearken to the word of promise and consolation: "Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb." Let us look unto the bright future and take courage!

*"Love" represented in the ordinance of feet-washing.* We have seen how faith is revived in the observance of the communion, and how hope is brightened as we surround the table of the Lord's Supper; now love, the greatest of all, is represented in the ordinance of feet-washing. How beautifully is this triune ordinance adapted to our great spiritual need. In the communion our minds were sent away back to Bethlehem and Galilee and Jerusalem and Calvary; we held on by faith to the promises of Jesus; then the Lord's Supper pointed us away into the bright, beautiful future of heaven. Thus we are brought to contemplate the *past* and the *future*, but we must not forget, between these two extremes, there is a *present*. This is brought

before us in the institution of feet-washing. In going back to the past, and basking in the sunshine of the future, we are liable to forget the present. Jesus desires us that we should not, and so we are reminded of our present duties. How often, in the great struggle with life and its trials, we are liable to become selfish! Feet-washing truly represents the service and duty we owe to one another. It is intended to teach us the true principle that should govern our conduct to one another. It is so easy for men to become puffed up in their own imaginations. Others may consider themselves superior to their brethren intellectually, socially, or financially; but this ordinance teaches us that whosoever would become greatest in the church must become servant of all. The whole secret is in the quality and quantity of the love in the heart. When we have the true love in our souls there is no service that we would refuse to do for our brethren. We are told that feet-washing is but a lesson of humility. True, humility is but one of the many features of Christian love. Feet-washing is a symbol of the many services that men can do for each other, so we practice it that the soul may be trained, and the mind brought to that condition of love that we will always be ready to put the principle into practice and use. The very act of feet-washing, the humility and submission necessary to its observance, is

eminently qualified to generate love. It is a seal of our brotherly love one to another. The submission of the heart in complying with the command of Jesus is an evidence of our love to the Lord; for we thus manifest our willingness to throw away our own likes and preferences, and bow to the will of God. Then the act of washing the feet of our brethren is a very emphatic expression of our love for each other.

Thus we have this trinity of virtues represented in the one ordinance. Here we become connected with the past and the future, and our duties for the present are emphatically taught. When these ordinances are observed with earnestness and honesty, they must be beneficial to the communicant. Faith, hope, and charity, are the fundamental principles of the Christian life. Every means should be used to cultivate and develop them. The soul grasps firmly the promises of the Lord, and our confidence in the sacrifice and teaching of Jesus is thoroughly established by coming into communion with him through his own ordained institution. Our hopes, too, are aroused and we take new courage. We also need to be constantly reminded of the great importance of active and practical love. This is accomplished by following the example of the Lord in his humble service to his disciples. Paul says the greatest of these

virtues is charity—good, common, every-day, practical love. Faith is only necessary for this life. It leads us through every trial to the portals of heaven. We will not need the faith when we are in full possession of the promises in which we have believed. So, with hope, when we grasp the reality, we will have passed beyond the shadow. But love never dies. It will go on with us through the tomb into eternity. The love that led us on to usefulness in this life and filled our hearts with joy, will continue to sway our existence in that higher life when we are free from the annoyances and trials of earth. Love, in its purest sense, will fill our souls with inexpressible joy forever.

## A RAINBOW OF PROMISE.

*"And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud."* Genesis 9: 14.

We are carried by the text, back over the long lapse of over four thousand years, to the time of the flood. Its desolating waters have subsided. The ark has rested on the top of Ararat. The earth is smiling again in its restored loveliness, forgetful of the fearful scenes it has lately witnessed. The inmates of the ark have gone forth from its protecting shelter to take possession of a spared and restored, but lonely and tenantless earth. The cattle are grazing quietly in the fields. The wild beasts are roaming joyously through the dripping forests, and the light-hearted birds are singing merrily in the resounding groves. The one chosen, favored family, who have been brought by the hand of Omnipotence across that world of waters to re-people the emptied earth, descended to the foot of Ararat. And there they pause, before going farther, to give utterance to the mingled emotions of gratitude and praise which swell in their bosoms. And there they build an altar and offer burnt-offerings of thanksgiving to Almighty God. While the little company are bowed in

speechless reverence around the smoking altar, the voice of Jehovah is heard. Let us listen to the gracious words: "I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; \* \* \* neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done." "And I will establish my covenant with you; neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood. \* \* \* And \* \* \* this is the token of the covenant which I make between me and you. \* \* \* It shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud, \* \* \* and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant \* \* \* which I have established between me and all flesh that is upon the earth." And as the sound of these gracious words dies away, we can imagine something of the feelings of overpowering awe and reverence with which that prostrate company lifted up their heads and saw, for the first time, perhaps, that form of beauty, that object of wonder, the bow of the covenant.

What is a covenant? Commonly it is an agreement, or, to use a shorter Saxon word, a bargain. That is to say, there are two parties to it, each of whom is to give something and to get something. But a covenant is not always of this two-sided character. It may be a voluntary engagement or undertaking, given for some sufficient motive with-

out any expectation of a return. Readers of Scottish history are familiar with the Covenanters of the seventeenth century. What was the covenant from which they derived their name? Not a bargain. Not an agreement, except among themselves. "The Solemn League and Covenant," as it was called, was simply a pledge publicly taken by multitudes, to oppose to the death, if need be, the introduction of prelacy into the Scotch church. And so it was with God's covenant in this instance. It is no mutual agreement. We have God's promise to Noah, but where is Noah's to God? There is no such thing. In fact, if this is a bargain, it is one in which all the giving is on one side and all the getting on the other.

The covenant was not simply with Noah, but with Noah's posterity, and what seems remarkable, with every living creature besides. Yes, wonderful as it may seem, God's promises extended even to the inferior animals. They were saved in the ark. They were to share, to a certain extent, the privilege given to man. This is like God. When he blesses one, the blessing overflows, and others enjoy it. In accordance with divine law, it is hard to confine advantages to one's self. When our government lights its torches along the shore, till from Machias, Maine, to Key West, the pathways of the sea blaze with these lamps, not only our own sea-

men, but those of foreign climes are benefited. So it is in the spiritual realm. God bestows many peculiar gifts upon his own; but other blessings, like the sunlight and the rain, reach the evil as well as the good. Men often enjoy privileges that are solely due to a Christianity at which they scoff.

But let us take our text out of its connection with the mere historical circumstances with which it is associated. Let us regard the clouds as representing the trials of life. These clouds often appear in our spiritual firmament. And on these clouds, the bow of God's promise of mercy is plainly to be seen by the eye of faith. The same law rules the natural and spiritual world. Here are oceans and seas and lakes and rivers with wide surfaces of water, from which, under the action of the sun's rays, evaporation is continually going on, and clouds are in constant process of formation. There must be clouds in a world like this. With the vast area of our experience, disappointments, trials and afflictions are a natural result. There are causes at work, which must as necessarily lead to this result as in the world of nature; the operation of the sun's heat on the water's surface must give rise to clouds. "Man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward." Sickness, poverty, suffering, and above all, sin dwelling in the heart, are spreading their blighting influence over everything.

We may have many bursts of sunshine, but in every stage of our journey we may expect to find clouds coming and overshadowing us. This experience belongs to us all alike, whether sinner or saint. When we are born into the family of God, there is no exemption given us from this experience. It is utterly impossible to put ourselves beyond the reach of these clouds and shadows. There is no position on earth so high or happy or honorable as to be above the plane in which these clouds move, and none so low as to be beneath the level to which they sink. The monarch cannot stretch out his sceptre and forbid them to approach him; and the beggar on your door-step cannot wrap himself up in his rags and say, "I am beneath their notice." The clouds have a mission to perform.

Two seeds lie before us. The one is left for the sun to shine upon it. The other falls from the sower's hand into the cold, dark earth. There it lies buried beneath the soil. The experience of these two seeds is so different, and very different are the results. That seed which suns itself in the noontide beams, may rejoice in the light in which it basks; but it is liable to be devoured by some bird; and certainly nothing can come of it, however long it may linger above ground. But the other seed hidden beneath the clods, in a damp, dark sepulchre, soon begins to swell with promise of a

change. It germinates. It bursts its shell. It upheaves the mould. It springs up a green blade. It buds and blossoms. It fills the purpose for which it was created. Better far for the seed to pass into the earth and die, than to lie in the sunshine and produce no fruit. Thus it is when clouds come and cast their shadows over us. Under the blessings that descend on us from these overshadowing clouds, we shall grow up in the likeness of our Lord, and answer the great purpose for which God has placed us here.

What a glorious lesson we are taught from our text that these clouds are under divine guidance. "When *I bring* a cloud over the earth." To make our religion practical we should remember that "He is a God at hand and not afar off." Our Savior teaches us to regard God's hand and power as connected with all events and controlling all results. God holds the elements in his grasp. Prove the reign of law and you simply prove the reign of God. How much like a thing of chance it seems when the moisture arises almost imperceptibly to human vision and floats away into the air of heaven! But there is nothing casual or chanceful about it. God is as truly present in that silent operation as he was when the world was made. He says, "I do bring it." Yes, the hand which forms them as they rise, is never removed

from them while they exist. No matter how these clouds of affliction come, the Lord watches and guides them, and they are intended for our good. The cloud may come directly from his hand, as when he smote the sons of Aaron with instant death; or Satan may be permitted to bring it, as when he was allowed to smite Job with stroke after stroke till life in unmitigated misery was all that was left him; or the malice of wicked men may be the occasion of it, as when Shimei came forth to curse David in the day of his calamity; or the unkindness and treachery of relatives may give rise to it, as when Israel's sons tore his darling Joseph from his embrace and sold him into cruel bondage, and lied to their father to hide their sin; all these clouds are sent for a good purpose. They are full of blessings, even if at the time they are unpleasant. God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb. We have nothing to fear; all these clouds are for our welfare. Let us seek the spirit of the Christian sailor, who, when asked, as the waves were raging, how he could have so little fear, replied, "Though I sink, I shall only drop into my heavenly Father's hand, for he holds all these water's there."

"The bow shall be seen in the cloud." It is easy to understand the feeling of dread with which, after the flood had subsided, Noah and his family would

have looked upon every cloud that rose in the sky, if it had not been for the comfort afforded them by God's gracious covenant, and the bow which was the witness of it. Every cloud has its silver lining. The reason we do not always see the silver lining, is not because it is not there, but because we willfully close our eyes. Sickness, sorrow, and death are dark clouds, and they seem as messengers of wrath and indications of divine displeasure rather than blessings. And if it were not for the bow of God's promises that spans the clouds, life would be a weary, hopeless pilgrimage. The Sunderings of our most sacred ties are dark clouds indeed, but the rainbow of hope which is reflected through the storm on its dark surface, consoles us somewhat, and causes us to look for future sunshine when the shadows are past. The rainbow follows the storm and darkness. It thus teaches us that "weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." Out of the flood that swept away an antediluvian host of sinners, came blessing for the race. In the end good triumphs over evil. Love succeeds wrath, as the lurid lightning is followed by the sunshine and the rainbow.

In order that the bow can appear to our sight, certain things are necessary. The cloud, the sun, and the rain, are indispensable. The cloud is the canvas.

The sun gives both the light and the colors. The falling drops of rain are needed as a medium to decompose the rays of light. So in a spiritual sense we must have a cloud—a ground work of human guilt and misery on which the bow is to appear. There must be a Sun of Righteousness, to shed forth its beams of light and love, and then there must be the descending showers of grace to portray the glorious rays and illumine with their brightness the dark horizon of man's prospects. This in our case has been accomplished.

The bow is high in the heavens. It is thus in the sight of all. It cannot be hid. Had God merely lighted a perennial fire on Ararat, Noah and his descendants in the neighborhood, might have seen it, but those who lived in other portions of the world would have been entirely ignorant of it. God's goodness is well indicated in the rainbow. It is ever visible. We might ask the question, why do not all the people of affliction, in this world of shadows, look upon this bow of promise and take all the comfort it yields? Why, it is just because they do not put themselves in a position to see it. The bow was intended for the people to look upon. And, of course, the eye of sense was necessary to see it. So we need the eye of faith to see the promises of God. We must look upwards. We may as well expect a blind man to see the

rainbow, as to suppose that any man without saving faith can see the bow of God's covenant as it spans the storm clouds of life's pilgrimage.

God's great lessons have been taught us through the works of his own creation. The Lord Jesus Christ illustrated all his grand truths from the realms of nature with which man was well acquainted. God designs that we should learn spiritual truths from the open pages of creation. The great universe of God is a most elaborate and perfect machine. Everything in the natural and spiritual world is an unbroken harmony. Wheels within wheels, all revolving round a common centre without the least jar or discord. We look upon the phenomenon of our text as merely an example of what the whole universe is. The air we breathe is just sufficient in density and just right in the proportion of its component parts for our need. A little less thickness to the atmosphere enwrapping the globe, a slight change in the proportion of oxygen and nitrogen, and human life would be impossible. The metals in their wonderful variety, the soils and the rocks in their mineral constituents, are adapted to every conceivable use. So it is with all nature. Creation is prophetic and is adapted for the future. A question may arise whether the rainbow was ever seen before. We hardly think it is necessary to suppose that there

had been no rainbow before. Yet if this were so, its principles existed from the beginning, and were provided to meet anticipated human needs. So is it of the rest of creation. Our coal beds were stored away ages since against the time when forests should grow scarce. Petroleum was laid away in subterranean tanks for man's need when whale oil should begin to fail. We find also that as in the case when God pointed Abraham to the stars in the heavens, he takes what exists and puts it into a new significance. This was also the case in the institution of the Lord's Supper. So are there hints of the world to come in our human constitution. In our aspirations, capacities, longings, and sense of justice, too often unmet on earth, is their provision for another life.

Then again, the rainbow has, until lately, been a mystery, though it is now explained. In these days, we understand that it is formed of the many colored rays of light shivered on the prismatic raindrops. But it was four thousand years before this fact was understood. We are not yet out of the stages of mystery regarding God's dealings with man. The promise spans the universe; but with all the trouble that fills the world, we cannot always explain its consistency with God's goodness. But it shall be made plain hereafter, "for now we

know in part, but then shall we know even as also we are known."

We notice also from the circumstances surrounding our text that there is suggested here a union of sympathy between God and man. God promises that he will look upon the rainbow. Man, too, always looks upon it whenever it is stretched before him. The eyes of God and man then meet at the same point. Too often does man stand with eyes averted from that which pleases God. The great center of God and man is the Lord Jesus Christ—the Bow of Promise. He hung in glorious beauty on the cross, uplifted above the earth. We are reconciled to God through him. Let us then fix our eyes upon him steadfastly. The day hastes when God's mercy will be triumphant, when the throne, a symbol of the divine government, will be seen by an assembled universe to be wreathed with a rainbow indicative of God's love. Christ's work is that glorious arch. As he hung upon the cross darkness covered the earth, tears streamed from many eyes, the lightning of God's wrath seemed playing in the heavens. But as he rose from the dead the sun shone out, the bow of salvation stretched from pole to pole. Let us accept God's grace through Christ, and at once will the storm-cloud of unbelief pass from our heart and the bow of hope span the heavens.

We should not be afraid of the clouds. They are often the harbingers of great blessings. Do not forget the bow of promise. When men come to swollen streams which they desire to ford, how anxiously they look for the fresh hoof-tracks, and if they happen to see them, how glad they are! It is some comfort for them to know that some one has just recently passed over. The swift current of the ford still makes them fearful lest they cannot cross. They look to the other side anxiously for those who have just crossed. They listen, and hear voices in the woods, although they see no one. Then they go down to the brink and call out, "Ho! friends, is the ford safe to cross?" After a few moments of anxious waiting, the answer comes back as an echo, "Yes, all safe, we have just crossed. Come on." Then they boldly step in, but as they go to the middle of the stream their hearts quail as the waters get deeper. They halt. The water is already pattering around the flanks of the horses. They dare not return. They look wistfully from one shore to the other, and then at the swift current which threatens to sweep them away. But by this time the men on the other shore have come down to the water's edge to see how it fares with them, and they encourage them to come on, telling them there is no danger if they will only plunge in fearlessly. They go on, the water is getting above

the saddles, and every man now makes up his mind he must swim or be carried away in the stream. Then the foremost man passes the middle of the current, and the water gets lower until it reaches only to the horse's knees. Then he shouts to his companions, "I'm safe. Come on, there is no danger." Then when they reach the other shore, they all smile at the groundless fears they manifested.

Now, Christians, we are standing by the side of the flood; we are afraid to enter in. Do you not hear the voices of those on the other side, cheering you on? Take courage and plunge in. The bow of God's promise is plainly seen on yonder cloud. The voices of friends who long ago stemmed the current, the voices of the loved and the lost—lost on this side and saved on the other, are calling out to you, "Come over! come over!" Angels stand by their side, yes, and our blessed Lord, all mingle their voices together and cry, "Come over! come over!" And when we get over we will have all eternity to chant our songs of praise and sing, "We are safe—safe forever."

## THE LONELY NIGHT-WRESTLE.

*"And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day."* Genesis 32:24.

The waters of Lake Erie stretch out in a broad and calm expanse. But presently the shores converge, the channel narrows, the waters, forced into the pathway of the Niagara, become turbulent. They pour on with wild velocity in their course, casting themselves in a seething, hissing, roaring mass over the precipice, and plunge onward below, boiling and surging between high walls of rock, till presently these precipitous walls separate. The river broadens, and the troubled stream glides forth and loses itself in the unruffled waters of Lake Ontario. Such was Jacob's life. For twenty years it had been spent peacefully and monotonously on the plains of Upper Syria. Now gathering all together, he was hastening by forced marches to a home the Lord should give him. In the last few days life had assumed an intensity before unknown. Here, midway in his journey, dangers thickened around him. He knew not which way to turn. Agonizing emotions, terrible fears, bitter compunctions, were sweeping madly on in his soul. But peace came at last; on the morrow, with the

early dawn, a new experience opened upon him. After this night of anguish, his life, though not free from trouble broadened into quiet, spiritual prosperity, and finally a serene old age. The night of our text was the Niagara of his life.

Yes, this is the turning point in the life of this great man. His life hitherto had been spent in scheming and plotting for his own aggrandizement. Until this night his whole object had been to take care of himself, even if others suffered. Read the record of his actions up to this time, and then his life from this night until his death, and you cannot help but remark the great difference. More than twenty years ago he fled from the face of his angry brother, with whom he had dealt treacherously. The Lord then appeared in a vision. He sees God at the distant top of the ladder of blessing. God makes a covenant with him, and renews the promises made to Abraham and Isaac. More than twenty years had been spent in the home of his uncle, Laban, and during this time he had not kept his part of the covenant with God. His life here, when scrutinized closely, will be found to have been rather deceptive. He had forgotten his vows; therefore, God visits him again, and this night struggle is the pivot of his life.

“And Jacob was left alone.” What volumes of thought these words suggest! Alone, with the dark

record of a misspent life and broken vows; alone, while the cruel thoughts of deception, treachery, and falsehood go surging through the mind. He could not forget how he had cheated Esau out of his birthright, and now he is about to meet his brother once again, and knows not whether the interview is to be one of reconciliation or of revenge. He had before this committed his case to God in prayer. But notice that even in this prayer there is a tinge of the old selfish nature. It is a dread of danger that has wrung that prayer from Jacob's lips; and yet allowance must be made for this, for our first prayer is mostly of this kind. It is a desire not to be shielded from sin, but from temporal danger. Yet, with all the preparations he had made to appease the wrath of his brother, the suspense of his heart is such that he can endure no society for the time. So, having taken his family over the Jabbok, he recrosses the brook to be alone, that, unrestrained by the presence of another, he may open his heart, and let out the bitter waters of its deep anxiety.

There is a certain solitariness about every man. The proverb says that "there is a skeleton in every house," and it is equally true that there is a secret closet in every heart, where the soul keeps its skeleton. There is something in every soul that is never told to mortal. Even those nearest and

dearest to us know not of these hidden things. They are kept for solitude; nay, such is their power over us sometimes, that they draw us into retirement, that they may speak to us alone. Most of this congregation know this experience, and even while I have been speaking we have each been fingering the key, which unlocks that secret drawer in the soul's cabinet to which I have alluded. But we do not desire to open it now; we cannot suffer other eyes to look upon its contents. That sin of our youth, that act of thoughtlessness, that terrible temptation, that impending danger, are themes which we cannot speak of at the public meeting, or to the casual acquaintance who greets us on the street, or even to our most intimate and confidential friend. But when our homes are silent and our children are at rest; when Jacob-like we have taken all our household over the brook and recrossed it into solitude, then it is that these secrets sweep over our soul.

Every real sorrow or struggle isolates us from our fellows. Just as we shall have each to die alone, so every minor suffering takes us apart from the multitude, and the keener the suffering the more thorough is the isolation. We crave for human sympathy, indeed; but even at the very moment of our craving we feel how vain the longing is, for well we know our heart has a bitterness

which it refuses to make known to another mortal; and even when they tender their sympathy, their words fall like hailstones on our hearts. How often, too, when we have been misjudged and misrepresented by our fellows, have we felt like Jacob here—sleepless in our solitude, and looked out through the darkness for some Peniel angel to come to our relief! This is solitude in its most lonely aspect. We are like the shipwrecked mariner on his feeble raft, cast on the great, wide ocean all alone. “So lonely, that even God himself scarce seemed to be there.”

“And there wrestled a man with him.” A something wrestled with him until the break of day. At first it appeared as a man, then as an angel, and then as the Infinite Jehovah himself. Mark, it was not Jacob wrestling with a man; but a man wrestling with Jacob. This scene is very commonly referred to as an instance of Jacob’s power in prayer. This is not so. When I wrestle with a man, I want to gain some object from him. When a man wrestles with me, he wants to gain some object from me. Now, in Jacob’s case, the divine object was to bring him to see what a poor, feeble, worthless creature he was, and when Jacob so pertinaciously held out against the divine dealing with him, the Lord put forth his hand and smote him so that he could not stand. This strug-

gle was a real one; hand to hand, foot to foot, until the break of day, and then the mighty touch of his mysterious antagonist crippled him in a moment; and then Jacob, seeing his helplessness, clung to the Lord, and refused to let him go without a blessing.

We learn from this incident that, in our sorrow and isolation, God alone can give us the consolation and peace we need. Here we have one of those partial and temporary anticipations of the Incarnation, which were given from time to time in the patriarchal and Mosaic economies, and which prepared the way for the great manifestation of divine love when God visited it in the flesh nearly twenty centuries afterwards. It is to be remarked that this mysterious stranger, in whom God was partly concealed, presented himself to Jacob in the form best fitted to call forth the confidence of the anguished soul. Not in the radiance of unveiled divinity does Jehovah appear; not amidst the thunderings and lightnings of Sinai does he come; not in the earthquake or avalanche; not with tens of thousands of white-robed angels in clouds of fire; for, had he come thus, poor Jacob would have been overwhelmed, and would have fled from his presence. The fear of Esau would have been swallowed up in the terror of the Lord. The patriarch saw a man whom he could freely approach as a fellow-

man, and yet this man was so surrounded with a mystery, that Jacob felt there was something more than human there. Are we not reminded in this of the God-man, Jesus Christ? It was impossible for God to reach us more effectually than as he came in the child Jesus. Bethlehem's manger, the mechanic's shop at Nazareth, the fishing boats at Gennesaret, the bloody, weary way from Bethlehem to Calvary, are the greatest invitations to the poor, destitute, and broken-hearted that could be offered to the human family.

Homer tells us of the parting scene of Hector and Adromache. The hero was going to his last battle, and his wife accompanied him as far as the gates of the city, followed by a nurse carrying in her arms the infant child. When he was about to depart, Hector held out his hands to receive the little one; but terrified by the burnished helmet and waving plume, the child turned away and clung crying to the nurse's neck. In a moment, divining the cause of the infant's alarm, the warrior took off his helmet and laid it on the ground, and then, smiling through his tears, the little fellow leaped into his father's arms. Just this way the great Jehovah, with his gorgeous helmet dazzling with heavenly brightness, would frighten us poor, weak, guilty ones away. But in the person of the Lord Jesus, in the lowly stable, as the humble

carpenter, the burnished helmet of glory was laid down, and now the guiltiest and the neediest are encouraged to come unto him. In the howling tempest, when the white-capped waves threaten to sweep the deck of the storm-tossed ship, the sailor will not rely on his own strength, neither will he grasp his fellowman; he will cling to the strong bulwark. So, when the hurricane of agony surges over our heads, and threatens to engulf us in the ocean of despair, it will not do for us to depend on ourselves, nor look to our fellow-man for help; but cling to him who can bid the waves of trouble, as they beat against the human heart, and lo! there will be a calm.

Certain philosophers once filled a golden sphere with water, closed it tightly, and subjected it to a great pressure. The water within oozed through the pores of the gold. Heaven is full of love and sympathy. For four thousand years a loud wail had risen from the depths of human woe and misery and pressed hard against the very gates of Paradise. So hard was this pressure, that the divine love has literally oozed in streams through the golden walls. We see this love stream flow down to the village inn at Bethlehem, and roll over the blood-stained hill of Calvary. On, on, it has flowed through fire, blood, and smoke until now, and it

will continue to flow through the ceaseless ages of eternity.

“And there wrestled a man with him.” Glorious thought! God strives with man. At such times of trial the soul at first finds a seeming foe. Jacob at first defended himself against his mysterious adversary. Who can tell what fearful surmises came over him as he wrestled in the dark with his terrible opponent? Can this be Esau? No, this is superhuman strength. Can this be God? It is surely none else; but why does he meet me thus? So obstinately did Jacob struggle with the divine visitor, that he was compelled to entirely prostrate him before he would surrender. How is it with us? How long has God been wrestling with you, my brother? You have obstinately struggled with his providence through the long, dark night of gloom. At last he has been compelled to put forth his hand, and take away that which has given you strength. Through the long sickness a few years ago, you yet defied him; then came a financial crash, and yet there was no surrender; the wife of your bosom and your little ones were stricken down, and yet you fought on; then, when the storm at last burst upon your little household, and you beheld the darling of your heart snatched from your midst, while friends silently walked about the house, speaking to one

another in low whispers, and the undertaker came to prepare the little one for the cruel tomb, you were yet stubborn. Through the funeral services, while sympathizing friends stood by, you took a last look at the dear one, and all through that slow, solemn march to the cemetery, there was no relenting. But when standing at the yawning grave, and the earth struck the coffin lid with a dismal thud, you felt the hand of God; your strength was gone; you surrendered. Then there was wrenched from the very depth of the soul that cry, "I will not let thee go unless thou bless me." You clung to him and felt his blessing. God wrestled with you. It was necessary that you should be smitten before you would surrender and cling to him. "God desireth not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should turn from his wickedness and live." Ye bereaved and broken-hearted, come lay down your arms this morning, and surrender up to God. The flag of truce is waving from the battlements of heaven, and you have it in your power to say whether it shall be peace or war. Remember, however, it must be an unconditional surrender on your part.

"And there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day." Yes; until the breaking of the day. The Lord wrestles with his children throughout this night of gloom and sorrow. Trib-

ulations and anguish hover around our lives as dark clouds, threatening every moment to overwhelm us. How anxiously we look through the gloomy blackness for the dawning of the morn! The bright anticipation of the golden sunrise is what makes the darkness tolerable. How often through the black, stormy night of life do we scan the horizon for a gleam of light that betokens the approach of day! God, in his mercy, often causes these storm-clouds to separate, that a little ray of light may peep down upon us, and give us hope and consolation. How impatient and fretful we become under the visitations of God! Remember that grief and sorrow is our lot here, but joy cometh in the morning. Patience, ye grief stricken; the night will soon be over. Do you not see over the distant hills yonder there is a ray of light? That light emanates from the glorious Sun of Righteousness, and it will be but a short time until the golden flood of heaven's light, in all its richness, will burst in upon you. A few more struggles, a few more pangs, and our night of lonely watching and waiting will be over. Then courage, fellow-pilgrim. Cling to the riven side of Christ—you have a good hand hold there; thrust it in deep, for the day is breaking.

In the last place, I remark that these sad experiences leave their mark on us. We read that

“Jacob halted on his thigh.” This was a literal fact. The rocks beneath us bear the marks of the flames to which they were exposed milleniums ago; and in the mountain ridges of our planet we may see the record of those terrible convulsions and upheavals to which, in former ages, it was subjected. In like manner the spirit of a man is marked by the fires of those trials through which he has been made to pass. We can even see, in the character and disposition of the individual, the result of these inner struggles. Through these bitter wrestlings the furrows of the brow grow deeper, the smile loses its joyfulness, and a calm, resigned sorrow is visible on every feature. The lameness of Jacob was not the only permanent memorial of his night of wrestling which he bore upon him. This was only the outward mark; the soul bore evidence of the great struggle. In the heated state of the metal, the die comes down upon it, and stamps its image permanently there. It is the work of a brief space, but the impression lasts while the metal endures. So, in the white heat of the soul, during some time of inner agony, it becomes soft and impressible, and then comes God’s minting Spirit to enstamp himself upon it, making an impression which no time can obliterate, and no change efface. Whenever we see the likeness of God plainly visible in the life of a humble Chris-

tian, we instinctively conclude that some Peniel nights have made him what he is.

“Jacob called the name of the place Peniel,” but he did not, as at Bethel, erect a pillar there. He needed not any such outward memorial of the time, for the wrestling of the night had burned its remembrance indelibly upon his heart, and many a time in his later life would he look back with gratitude on the blessing he thus received.

Brother, sister, where is your Peniel? Is there not some spot on earth which is sacred to you, as the place where you met God “face to face?” It may have been on your sick couch last year; it may have been on the ocean, or in some foreign land, far away from the dear and loved ones of your once happy home; it may have been at the open grave of father or mother, or by the empty cot in the midst of your desolate home; or it may have been by some open window, where you sat in your loneliness, looking through blinding tears into the bright starlight for a ray of hope. Wherever it is, it is dear to us. These are our battle fields, where Christ gained the victory over us; where we surrendered ourselves soul and body to him. Even this sanctuary can be a Peniel to some poor, burdened sinner. Why wait any longer, resisting the pleadings of Christ? Do you not know that it is the Lord of heaven and earth with whom you are

wrestling? Therefore surrender; lay down your arms; cling to the cross; cry, "I will not leave thee unless thou bless me." The answer will be wafted from the eternal throne of God, "Thy name shall be called no more Jacob," or supplanter, "but Israel," a prince of God.

## THE EVERLASTING ARMS.

*"Underneath are the everlasting arms."* Deut. 33: 27.

In the stillness of the night, while the inmates of a house were buried in sleep, the alarm of fire was raised. The flames were making rapid progress, and the lower part of the building was soon consumed, and escape from the upper stories entirely cut off. All the family but one little boy were safe. This little fellow finding that he was too late to escape by the staircase, had found his way through the blinding smoke to a window, and was seen hanging by his hands from the window sill on the outside. He was so far from the ground that he was afraid to let go his hold and drop. His father got underneath the boy and shouted to him, "Drop, my son, father will catch you." And without any hesitation, recognizing the voice, and knowing that the strong, loving arms of his father were stretched out underneath him, he let go, and was safely caught. So beneath us are the everlasting arms of a loving Father. They are ever outstretched to catch us while hanging in the midst of great dangers, and if we will only trust to his love and strength, let go our hold of these weak and temporary things to which we cling

so tenaciously, we will find a refuge in his embrace. Moses will ever take a prominent place in the roll of heroes in the Lord's cause. Our text introduces him to us just as he is to take his last farewell of the people whom he had faithfully led for the last forty years, through all kinds of dangers and trials. His great life-work was done, and in obedience to the Lord, was about to ascend Mount Pisgah to end his earthly career, in view of the promised land. Before taking his leave, he called the tribes before him and gave them advice and encouragement. In this benediction the piety of Moses is brought out very prominently. He takes no credit to himself, but points them to the Lord, whose greatness and goodness they had so often seen and felt. He is their sure refuge, and underneath all the dangers and changes of the past, present, and future, are the everlasting arms of Jehovah. He had supplied all their wants and cared for them with unremitting constancy. This, indeed, has been the experience of men of God of all ages, when they have reviewed the providence of God. In all their toil and danger the Eternal God has been their refuge, and underneath them are the everlasting arms. But at present it will pay us to look at our text in its broadest application, and we will find it true in relation to the realms of nature, providence, and grace.

First, then, we will notice our text in relation to the realm of nature. "Underneath are the everlasting arms." This is the death-blow to the false theories of atheistic science. I know of no doctrine either more absurd or more impious than that of fatalism—a doctrine which shuts out of the universe an intelligent first cause, and makes all events the result of a blind and irresistible necessity. Evolution and development are now taught without a God. "Protoplasm," "fire-dust," and "eternity of matter," are brought forward now to prove that the first verse of the Bible is a falsehood. The "everlasting arms" are entirely excluded. The infidel has no other law but chance. All his grand theories for the great works of nature above, beneath, and around us, can be summed up in the one word—chance. Without the guiding hand of a Master, and the designing mind of an Architect, what else can it be but chance? Evolution without a God, or the law of nature without a God, is nothing more or less than chance. The Bible gives us the key to all these mysteries. Whether we look at the starry heavens, the ocean depths, the snow-capped mountains, the waving forests, the verdant hill-sides, the luxuriant valleys, or even the mechanism of our own wonderful frames, the fact that underneath them are the everlasting arms,

puts all the guess-work theories of atheistic science in the shade.

It is a great task to account for all the beauty and wonderful harmony of nature without acknowledging the wisdom and power of God as the first cause. And it is strange that men will attempt the undertaking. Science, or the study of nature, reveals beyond a doubt the master-hand of a divine Creator. I take the stand, this morning, that there are developed in the discoveries and researches of science, traces of design and wisdom that prove not merely that there was, but that there is a God. That was an unanswerable argument that a poor, unlearned Arab used when he was asked by an infidel philosopher, how he knew there was a God. The man of the desert took him to the door of the tent, and said, "You may as well ask me how I know that a camel was at this door during the night. It is because I see his tracks in the sand. So when I see the sun and the moon travel through the heavens above us, I see the foot-prints of a God."

Look at the heavens above us for a moment. The fact that our sun is the center of a solar system is not a very ancient discovery. Just conceive this, that our sun with his solar system is only a little group around another central sun, who has a thousand solar systems around him.

And this central sun, with his thousand solar systems, is only another group around another central sun, in the vast starry host that shines in the expanse above. We see but the sentinels and the outposts of that mighty glistening army. These, with unmistakable certainty, silently tell us that underneath are the everlasting arms.

Skeptics cannot account for the grand arrangement which we see everywhere around us in nature; therefore they claim it is due merely to accident. Mercury is forty millions of miles from the sun. He does not want a moon, and by a very lucky accident, the infidels will say, he has not got any. Venus is sixty millions of miles from the sun, and does not need a moon, and by the same peculiar chance, she has none. The earth, however, is ninety-five millions of miles from the sun, and by an unexplainable accident, the earth has a moon, just at the very point at which she could not well do without one. These are very like the acts of Deity. So, again, Jupiter is five hundred millions of miles from the sun, and by a lucky accident, he has got four moons; exactly proportionate to his immense distance from the sun. Surely this beautiful and wise arrangement tells us there is an Omniscient God underneath all.

Supposing that we throw a font of type on the floor. Is there the remotest shadow of a chance of

this type arranging itself so that a book could be printed? Certainly not. In ten million ages the type would be found there unmoved unless some one with the power and will would move it. A pile of bricks taken and thrown in a heap on the street, will remain there unless interfered with. If we should see those bricks arranged into a house, we would instinctively infer the presence of a designing mind. Or, to take Paley's beautiful illustration, if we went into a desert and found a watch, and upon opening it, we saw all the wheels and cranks apparently in opposition to each other, yet all working in perfect harmony, we must conclude that it was so arranged by some one. The watch never put itself into such a condition. If we inspect the universe, from the loftiest star that shines above us, down to the minutest insect that flutters in the sunbeam, and cannot see the foot-prints of the great Creator, we are troubled with a very blind mind or with a very bigoted heart. The Bible tells us that it is "the fool" who hath said in his own heart, "There is no God."

While we are speaking of arrangement and harmony, we might call attention to the design displayed in the atmosphere around us. How the air we breathe is purified by the plants and waters. In fact, the more we study the universe, the more

we are convinced that underneath are the everlasting arms. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" is the only solution to all this harmony and arrangement. Underneath the soil that quickens the seed, underneath the whole mighty universe, underneath all that sustains and develops life, are the everlasting arms.

Next, we will notice our text in relation to providence. "Underneath are the everlasting arms." This is the doctrine taught us in the Bible. As in the realm of nature, so also in the affairs of men, there is no such thing as chance. The history of nations is under the guidance of Jehovah. He rules among the inhabitants of earth and heaven, and makes even the wrath of man to praise him. It is impossible to turn over the leaves of history and fail to see that the everlasting arms are underneath. The evidence of a presiding Providence in the rise and fall of empires, in the policy of cabinets, in the exploits of conquerors, and in the biographies of individuals, is just as patent to a reflecting Christian mind as is the sun to the outward eye in the unfolding bud of spring, and in the rich blossoms of summer. Were God to withdraw his providential guidance from the world, man would soon become a fiend, angels would flee from this earth as from the abode of demons, and

Satan in all his hellish majesty would reign unmo-  
lested over sea and land.

We find that in the history of the world, man takes a prominent part. Indeed, man is the most wonderful as well as the most perplexing phenomenon of history. We find that angels have their work in unfolding the affairs of men—opening its mysterious seals, sounding its awful trumpets and pouring forth its dreadful vials. Satan, too, plays a part in the great drama of history—ever active to suggest what is evil, arrest what is good, and overthrow what is holy, pure, and divine. But above all, God looks on with a jealous eye, turning and guiding all the wheels and cranks of events to his infinite glory; yea, even bringing into subjection all obstinate and opposing forces, so that all works toward a grand and glorious result. But many would be glad if they could argue and reason and talk God out of history. They would like to exclude him in every sense from the affairs of men, so that they would be free from the awful responsibility that rests on them by his presence. They wish there were no God, and they try their best to believe there is no God, and on this principle of no God all their actions are based. These people are not merely satisfied with their infidel ideas of God, but they manifest a decided animosity which often culminates in a mean hostility to the

teachings of the Bible. They are not merely atheists, but in the bitterest sense of the word they are anti-theists. But in spite of all this, nature and providence tell us that underneath are the everlasting arms.

Very small straws turn the whole course of the stream of events. The most insignificant events have changed the history of continents. An acorn is a little thing of itself, and if laid on one side, it moulders and corrupts; but cast into the earth, it germinates and grows up into the mighty oak—the monarch of the woods—and in due time it is the strength of the gallant ship that rides the ocean, and connects distant continents, and carries the message of salvation to them that are in darkness. Everything must have a beginning. The sources of the mighty rivers that water the luxuriant valleys, and carry blessings with them through the length and breadth of continents, have their source in some insignificant streamlet, or an obscure mountain side. When Lawrence Coster, in 1423, while amusing children by carving their names on the bark of the trees, conceived the idea of making wooden type, he had no idea of the grand result of this thought to the human family. It is true that Egyptians and Chinese, hundreds of years before this, carved letters on blocks, and printed from the blocks; but this Dutchman, of Haerlem, was the

first one to tie the letters into words and sentences, and print from them. Our great printing appliances are only improvements of this simple invention. It is hard to conceive the blessing the art of printing has been to the world.

Then, again, the half-starved son of a poor and obscure miner, while attending a charity school, used to go out in the morning and sing for his breakfast. This boy became a learned man and a Romish monk. At the right time, in the darkest day of the Dark Ages, this man, in the person of Martin Luther, struck such a mighty blow at the Papal throne, that its force was felt in every country in Christendom, and from which the Romish Church has never recovered. In the invention of printing and the commencement of the greatest religious revolution the world ever saw, we see the "everlasting arms." How beneficial the former was to the latter! and how poorly and slowly would the gospel have been disseminated had it not been for the invention of Lawrence Coster and John Gutenberg.

We see the footprints of Almighty God in the history of our own country; how the imposition of a few taxes caused the building up of one of the greatest nations upon earth, which has been an asylum and a city of refuge to the poor and oppressed of the whole world. And when we consider

the mighty strides that Christianity has taken since, we must undoubtedly give all the glory to God. There is no greater proof, that underneath the history of nations are the everlasting arms, than the victory of unarmed Christianity; the onward march of the insulted, resisted, and denounced gospel. Starting at the empty tomb of their risen Lord, the first ambassadors of Christianity went forth to subdue the earth, with no patronage but an open world, and no help but him who had promised to be with them. Persecution fanned its flames. The winds of heaven wafted to distant lands the testimonies of the saints. All winds bore her onward. Her record in all lands is the imperishable evidence of the everlasting arms. Sin has tried to burst the restraints of the gospel, and the fierce and violent have done their best to tear up by the roots that tree of life, whose shadow gives protection even to them; but, like the banyan tree, the more its upper limbs have been cut and hacked, the wider and deeper the under roots have spread. God stands by the old tree, and though we see him not, he protects it from devastation; and even the false and vicious, though undesignedly, were made to glorify his name. I know of no more eloquent proof of the everlasting arms being underneath the affairs of men, than that all the self-created architects have failed to

build up a lie, and all the tortures, dungeons, and stakes of the Inquisition have failed to burn down one truth. Truth is not consumed with her martyrs. When the iron hoof of infidelity shall trample under foot all the church houses, shrines, and holy places of Christianity, there shall still be left in the bosom of every true Christian the altar of love and faith, which man nor devils can neither mar nor destroy, for underneath are the everlasting arms.

Lastly, we will notice our text in relation to the realm of grace—"Underneath are the everlasting arms." Man is an independent being. He would like to be able to purchase his way into eternal happiness by good works. So many of us depend entirely upon rites and ceremonies and sacrifices. It is a hard lesson for us to learn that, of themselves, they can avail us nothing. We must endeavor to clear away the rubbish that has been accumulating for ages, and get down to the bed-rock—the "everlasting arms." We hear much about the cross of the God-man, Jesus; we meditate, and talk, and theorize about the blood of Christ, but back of all this is the love of God; underneath all are the everlasting arms. Yes; underneath the glorious gospel of his grace are the everlasting arms, that make the gospel victorious over the deep-rooted enmity of sin. We may

build up ideals of our own, decorate them with the ornaments of morality and civilization. We may extemporize creeds, and even embellish them with gospel truths. We may be earnest, and sincere, and zealous in the performance of the outward duties of the church, but if underneath it all is not found a firm reliance on the everlasting arms, then all is in vain; we are merely swinging in empty space. The faith of the individual must rest solely on God, and not on penance, though it be in the shape of good works. We are saved by grace. Salvation is a free gift.

The arms of God are our fortress and strength. The arm is suggestive of power, therefore we see, by the expression of our text, the divine power of God underneath all. These arms will support us; keep us from falling. Enfolded in their embrace, we are safe from evil and danger. While they will hold us in their powerful grasp, they will not crush the feeblest. How large are these arms? They encircle the whole universe of earth and heaven. They stretch out under all things, above, beneath. The nations of the earth, through all the centuries of time, will find a refuge in their embrace. The arms of the Lord are stretched in mercy to save, and not to destroy. They are "everlasting." Let us rejoice; those arms will never tire nor faint. Human power is frail and very limited. We can-

not make a prop that will support us through the trials and storms ahead. We may fortify ourselves upon human mandates, and feel perfectly safe; but human mandates, especially if they make the word of God of none effect, are a sandy refuge in the day of Judgment. No; let us lean on the arms that never grow weak or weary. That was a glorious thought of the little boy, whose little invalid sister had but recently died. One day he asked his mother why she looked so sad, and whether she was not glad that Jesus had taken his little sister away? The mother wanted to know why. "I often noticed," he replied, "that when you were holding her during her long illness, you looked so very tired. Now Jesus will hold little sister in his arms, and, should he get tired, he will hand her round to all the angels; so that no one will get tired in heaven." Let us have that confidence in the everlasting love of God.

The arms that hold up the universe were stretched out and nailed to a cruel Roman cross. These same arms are now mercifully stretched out to save you and me. These arms have already spanned the oceans, and are pushing their way into the jungles of India; they have scaled the great wall of China, and are now at work in the benighted land of Confucius, Africa, the isles of the sea, South America, and the great forests of the West,

and even the countries of perpetual snow will all be gathered in when these arms close again. The arms of the Lord will not be withdrawn from supporting the earth, until the kingdoms of the world shall become the kingdoms of the Lord Jesus Christ. May God give us grace to rely on these everlasting arms. Amen.













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